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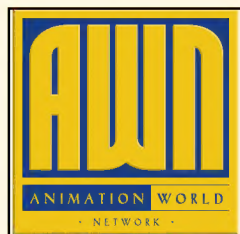
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Women in Animation



WATCH OUT!!

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Women in Animation

As several articles in this issue point out, women have often played a key role in animation. Unfortunately, within the animation industry itself, there remains a dearth of directors and others in key creative positions. While this is starting to change, their participation pales in comparison to the dominant role they play among independent animators, whose films often constitutes half the offerings at major international animation festivals. This is where women have also come into their own have been in the executive ranks, both here and abroad.

Thus, this issue is devoted largely to women in animation, it is not surprising that we offer a selection of pieces by and about independent animators. Thus, Poland's Aleksandra Korejwo, in her first attempt at writing an article in English, provides us with a startling autobiographical essay, rich with poetry and imagery, that attempts to explain the sources of her inspiration.

Rita Street explores the evocative films of Rose Bond, while William Moritz profiles the popular, but now largely forgotten pioneer experimental filmmaker; Mary Ellen Bute, and Giannalberto Bendazzi provides an appreciation of Claire Parker, whose role in animation history has often been subsumed to her husband.

As Linda Simensky points out in her article, "Women in the Animation Industry—Some Thoughts," the way women get to the executive suite in today's animation industry often differs markedly from the way men get there. This is clearly illustrated by my interview with Jim and Stephanie Graziano, who both came to be major players in television animation by distinctly different routes.

Jill McGreal in her piece, "Out of the Animation Ghetto," reports on how women, in both the executive and creative side of the business, are transforming animation at Britain's innovative Channel 4. Marcin Gizycki,

meanwhile, explores the past and present roles women have and are playing in Russia, Poland and the former Czechoslovakia in his piece, "Splendid Artists."

One of the more exciting and useful organizations around these days is Women in Animation. Rita Street, its founder and leader, provides a brief memoir on what led

to its founding and explains its activities and aims.

The way women have been portrayed in animation has often been a subject of concern in recent years, but that is certainly not a problem with regards to UNICEF's Meena and Sara projects, which are being used to fight destructive stereotypes seen in third world countries. Neill McKee and Christian Clark, who are both active in these projects, report on them in "Meena and Sara: Two Characters in Search of a

The way women have been portrayed in animation has often been a subject of concern in recent years.

Brighter Future for Women."

Our focus on women in this issue appropriately concludes with the second of Frankie Kowalski's "Desert Island Series."

New to this issue is our first set of film reviews of *James and the Giant Peach* and *All Dogs Go To Heaven 2*, by Wendy Jackson and Frankie Kowalski, as well as our first festival coverage from Giannalberto Bendazzi, who reports on *Cartoons on the Bay*, in Amalfi, Italy.

Bill Everson

I always like to say that my interest in film and animation stems from being an industry brat, my father having

worked at Fleischer and Famous Studios during the 1930s and 1940s. He was also a film buff, who had the pleasant habit of renting old silent films to show to family and friends on Friday nights. Although he died just before I turned 6, my older brother and I both maintained a strong interest in film; thus, at age 12, he took me to a series of films at New York's Museum of Modern Art, where I imbibed such classics as *Intolerance*, *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *Rashomon*.

However, it wasn't until I happened on the Theodore Huff Memorial Film Society, run by William K. Everson, who died on April 14, that my passion for films and film going really started to take focus. The Society, which in the 1950s held its screenings in somewhat seedy meeting halls that also hosted such events as reunions of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. More importantly, it provided a place for film buffs and scholars to meet, discuss and argue film. In those days before Cinema Studies became a respectable academic discipline, the Huff Society was key to the education of many a budding cinéaste, myself included.

I need not go into a litany of Bill's accomplishments or activities, which including being a tenured professor of cinema studies at New York University, despite being a high school dropout. Though animation was not his prime focus, he was not averse to showing Chuck Jones or Friz Freleng cartoons before they became fashionable.

I recall the time he was on an American Film Institute committee evaluating my proposal to do an oral history interview with animation pioneer J.R. Bray; to his (and my) surprise, he was the only one who knew who Bray was, and essentially shamed the others into approving my grant. For that and all the other kindnesses he showed me and others, I will always be grateful.

Harvey Deneroff
Editor-in-Chief

Animation World Magazine

My Small Animation World

by Aleksandra Korejwo



Aleksandra Korejwo at her animation stand.

"I only hope that we never lose sight of one thing—that it was all started by a mouse."

— Walt Disney

For me, it all started with salt. Everybody knows salt. It is a common material. But for me, it is more than just salt. In this material, I discovered my new way for Art, my new way for animation. There were many years

of research and hard work. People often ask me, "How can you do such difficult animation so fast? It is impossible." But I have been working for this moment all my life.

Before my great meeting with animation, I studied painting. I learned to play the violin and I wrote poetry. My first thought was to create unity between painting, music and poetry. I could see that it was possible in animation art film. It was a great event in my life. But it was not enough just to know about it, I wanted to do it.

I have been developing my own technique for many years. The most important thing was finding the method of coloring salt. I found it. It is a complicated process, but the effect on film is great.

The next task was finding special tools for my unique material. It happened suddenly when I visited the zoo.

I don't like looking at animals behind bars, but I know that some animals need man's protection. It was spring and the bird's feathers were dropping down onto the grass. They were long, strong feathers. I picked up a few and said, "Thanks" to the condors. After that, I formed the feathers in many ways and I have chosen the best ones, which I use to this day. Sometimes, the direction of your search can lead you to a surprise!

The Movement, The Color, The Form

My search for unity between painting, music and poetry began during my studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, where I did a lot of short musical compositions "without music." My belief was that the music could exist only in the viewer's imagination. Instead of from the sound, the music appeared in the movement, the color, the form! People said: "It is really colored music for our eyes."

At that time, I studied the works of John Cage. I prepared special scores for film, but I didn't note musical notes. I noted form, color...they were my notes. I was groping in the musical world, but I knew intuitively that it was a good way.

One day, something new happened. I was showing my film to a group of friends, but they had decided to give me a little surprise. When my film started, they switched on some music (it was some old Greek music I had never heard before). They wanted to see what the effect



The Swan by Aleksandra Korejwo

would be with my film. It was just a joke pairing this casual music with my silent film. My friends (and I) were so surprised when we could see that the synchronization was absolutely perfect!

My silent film became a "sound" film; a great event from the history of cinematography was being repeated in my own life.

From that moment, I began



The Travels of AKO

my new adventures with the greatest classical music composers. I started creating films with music. I "noted notes" and translated them into frames. My new scores were different than before. In my silent films, I created only one musical line, for movement. Now I had two lines: music and movement. The most important thing, was finding the relationship between the two.

My belief was that the music could exist only in the viewer's imagination.

Sometimes there was absolute synchronization, but sometimes I needed a counterpoint for a film idea. I was learning to understand the composers' ideas and share my ideas with them. I tried to be very humble and to, very subtly, rediscover the composers' personalities.

My parallel life motif which I was pursuing at this time, was to create films for children.

Colored Changing Pictures

When I was a child, as my family tells me, I used to watch Disney films and I would paint something like storyboards. My Mother laughs: "You used to sit on the floor and draw some rectangular frames with colored changing pictures inside." At that time, my Grandpa sent me a lot of coloring books with Disney characters. I loved Disney's "soft animation."

When I think about Walt Disney, I know that he felt movement. His characters really lived in his imagination. I believe the most important thing in animation is to feel movement.

Therefore, before I start with a film, I always work around the film. I paint a lot, I make drawings to find the best movement for each element. I like to study movement in nature. I prepare my special scores for films, of course. I change my psyche and my mind for new movement in a new film. I work with my camera "face to face," it is very important to have movement in mind.

Before I started with my first children's film, The Travel of AKO, I had thought about making a series for children. Disney was my inspiration, and I wanted to make films just like he did. The Travels of AKO is about three friends. The first looks like a yellow circle and is a very happy, optimistic "person"; the second, which is a blue triangle, is an enthusiastic, reserved, cold person; and the last is a very active and sometimes nervous person with a pink, square form. They appear and disappear, transforming into other

forms—good play for children.

Fairyland in Salt

Kids often visit me in my studio when I do my animation. They love to play with me and create forms from fairyland in salt.

When I was making my next film for children about seven little colored ducks (from Julian Tuwim's poem, "Hard Calculation"), I studied ducks walking in the country. My idea was to transmit from the screen to the child a visual knowledge of color theory, the process of additive and subtractive mixing of colors, through a good, humorous story.

The most important thing in animation is to feel movement.

I was pleased when the organizers of the International Animation Festival in Annecy, France, invited my film to the event.

Later, I came back to making films for music, especially classical music. In 1989, I made The Weaver to the music of Stanislaw Moniuszko, for which I received the Award for Animation from the Association of Polish Filmmakers.

After that, I made The Swan to the music of Camille Saint-Saëns. The idea for this film was born in Annecy, during the Festival, where I sketched swans gesturing near the lake. As I walked along the canals in this pretty town, I was fascinated by the



Eine Kleine Nachtmusik — Romanze Andante

pure white, majestic birds.

In my film, I wanted to achieve absolute perfect synchronization between music and painting. My film would also synchronize the ballet of a swan and a young girl.

I had to be a choreographer as well. Many ballerinas say *The Swan* is the most difficult composition for ballet. For this film, I received two awards: The Special Prize for Perfect Transposition of Music Into Pictures given by the Jury of the Festival of Films for Children and Young People in Poznan, Poland (1992) and Grand Prix for the Best Animation Film (Under 10 minutes) given by the International Jury of the Festival of Animation Films in Shanghai (1992).

At the Shanghai festival, I met many people from around the world, and many famous animation personalities. At that time I became an ASIFA member.

My next projects were the films, *Ave Maria* to music by Schubert and *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik—Romanze Andante* to music by Mozart.

**I had to draw very fast
because the horses wanted
to eat my drawings.**

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik was a film about the sometimes sorrowful life of Mozart. After the filming, I too, experienced sorrow, when it was discovered that all of the film had been overexposed due to a problem in the camera. I had to start all over again, but it was not the same film. In my technique, I animate directly under the camera; I destroy the first picture to create the second. When I finish, all that

remains is the dirty salt on the floor. The life of the material exists only in movement, and only for a few minutes, but I hope it remains forever in the imagination of the audience.

My next film was *Exultate Jubilate Alleluja* (Hallelujah), also to the music of Mozart, followed by *On the Beautiful Blue Danube* to the music of Strauss. For this film the organizers of the International



On the Beautiful Blue Danube

Animation Film Festivals in Canada, Portugal and France invited my film to their festivities.

Hollywood, The Soul Of Film

After my film was shown in Annecy (France) a man came up to me and said; "Congratulations"—It was Ron Diamond from Acme Filmworks in Hollywood. We began talking, I didn't listen to anything else during that evening ... Hollywood always makes me think of the soul of film—and Walt Disney, of course.

I was excited about the possibility of working in Hollywood, but I didn't believe it could really happen until Ron called me. Now, I know that he is a brilliant manager and producer. He found me work that was very well suited to my personality. I would make four films for the

Austin Lyric Opera in Texas.

There were four 30 second commercials to Opera music: *La Traviata*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. I had to choose 30 seconds from each of these operas for the films. Many ideas appeared in my mind. I think, I chose the best parts for my technique.

Now, when I think about my good fortune in meeting Diamond, I am reminded of my aunt who inspired me to create the film *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*. She was interested in my films. When I visited her, she would pour coffee for me in a very pretty cup with a beautiful, delicate design on it and we would talk about my films. She became very ill and on the last night before her death, she gave me that pretty cup for memory. That cup became a film star.

I often think about the parallels between my life and my films. Perhaps, one day I will make a live-action film about these parallels.

Synchronizing With My Life

Every film has a different story and synchronizes with my own life. My most recent film project (a three-part collection from the Bizet opera *Carmen*: *Carmen Suite*, *Carmen-Habanera* and *Carmen Torero*) was born in a little town in Spain called Huesca. The International Film Festival there had invited me and my film. I could feel the warm Spanish sunlight on my face and also in my heart. I saw fiestas which took place in the moonlight. In the morning, I observed the sun above the brown-red Spanish land. Of course, before I started making the films, I studied the Spanish

flamenco dance.

Also, before I started on the first Carmen film, I lived on a ranch. Everyday, I made lots of drawings among the horses. My lovely horses used to come to me and look at my drawings or paintings as if they were mirrors. It was very funny for me and I think for them also. I had to draw very fast because the horses (especially one of them) wanted to eat my drawings.

My professor from the Academy of Fine Arts used to say, "Keep your sketchbook in your pocket always." I try to make sketches every place I go. It is my principle. I keep my flipbook in my pocket.

I am very happy that I can participate in animation festivals, that I can travel to other countries. There are many places for interesting, sometimes surprising meetings with wonderful, sensitive people who are making art films more and more beautiful.

There is one heart of animation art shared by all film directors, animators, cameramen, good producers and enthusiastic people who love animation film.

Each animation festival impresses my mind and heart with a deep sign.

I try to note these impressions with drawings and write them down. When the last Annecy festival ended, I wrote a short impression:

"The day after the end of the Annecy Festival: I am sitting on a bench at the side of a lake. Only the swans are unchanged. The surroundings get altered, decorations change, the water in the canals has fallen low. People are walking faster. Trucks, cruising the park, make noise. Even pigeons are more uneasy and are looking

inquiringly.

"Only the swans are swimming quietly certain of their presence. My heart is full of conversations and animated forms. I am breathing the presence of people I saw (maybe it was too short to understand, too short to remember). Yet I can still observe the animation of life. The animated film is going on.

"The swan as question marks, maybe it is enough to sail along the route of God?"

The Ocean of Life

This story is only a little drop in the ocean of life. My life and work really makes me think of the ocean. Maybe every film is just like one wave? Always the same rhythm, but a different story, a different, unusual sound and form.

When I was teaching students at the Academy of Fine Arts they asked me, "You very often make films around ballet, dance, opera; what is the most interesting area for you?" My answer is, "Every moment is unusual for me. How amazing is movement in nature. I observe it often and I find ideas of the harmony in it. There is an incredible dialogue between cre-

ating shapes, sounds and movements.

"It is a great play of many instruments, of many feelings. The fantastic combination is joyful and sorrowful, dramatic and humorous—the true poetry of life. I feel like I am just one element from that composition, from that landscape. My body speaks the same language, which is sometimes called dance, ballet or pantomime."

And all the time, I am looking for the point of meeting between poetry, movement, music and painting. I see that point not only in music films, not only in ballet or other dance, not only in opera. I see that point everyday in my life. When I walk across the meadow, when I look at the ocean, and at the noisy intersection.

I think the most important thing is to be able to observe movement in its variety and still learn by looking at the world through artists' and children's eyes.

Alexsandra Korewjo

is a filmmaker based in Poznan, Poland.



Carmen Habanera

Jim & Stephanie Graziano: An Interview

by Harvey Deneroff

Last November, Jeffrey Katzenberg asked Jim and Stephanie Graziano to head up production for DreamWorks' new television animation division. While the offer was not surprising, given the Graziano's track record, what was surprising is how readily they accepted. After all, their company, Graz Entertainment, noted for such hit shows as *X-Men* and *The Tick*, was one of the hottest studios in town.

DreamWorks Television Animation is the newest and so far least clearly defined of DreamWorks SKG, Hollywood's newest super studio. The division's mandate extends beyond only television to also include direct-to-video productions and interactive animation. The operation itself falls under the aegis of Steven Spiel-

berg was known for his hands on involvement in these shows, which is likely to continue in the new venture. (In addition, former Disney Television Animation President Gary Krisel has been brought in to oversee the whole operation.)

Stephanie Graziano explained that, "We had three previous offers to buy the studio, but none of them made any sense. DreamWorks was the first case where we were offered things that we were lacking as a small studio.

There was also the fact that it was a startup, which is always exciting, and that we could work together. That was really a big part of it."

Despite being one of Hollywood's most successful animation couples, Jim and Stephanie Graziano have not been able to work together as much as they would like. In fact, Jim had just returned to Graz after a three year stint at Universal Cartoon Studios when DreamWorks came along. Their longest stint together was not at Graz, but at Marvel Productions, where they met (in 1984) and married (in 1988)—he was Senior Vice President of Production and she

worked under him as a producer.

Why Would We Even Want to Do It

"People often ask us," Stephanie says, "about how we work together, or why we would even want to do it. But we really are at our best working together. We actually have different mind sets, but they end up complementing each other."

She explains that, "I come from the creative side, while Jim comes more from the technical end. So, in trying to find solutions to problems, we realize that not every person is the same. Some artists are better dealt with in a creative fashion,

while others are better dealt with in a technical fashion. What we try to do is weigh these situations and decipher which direction would be more appropriate."

This difference also translates into different strengths

vis-à-vis their roles at Graz. "When we started Graz," Stephanie notes, "we opened it with three work for hire series. I did all of the administrative work and Jim actually ran the studio. At that point, because it was really a function of his getting the production going, it was perfect. After the first six months, when he went to Universal and I



Stephanie Graziano
© Graz Entertainment



Jim Graziano

We actually have different mind sets, but they end up complementing each other.

berg, whose previous TV efforts in collaboration with Warner Bros. (*Tiny Toon Adventures*, *Animaniacs*, *Pinky and the Brain*, etc.) helped revolutionize broadcast animation.



X-Men, Red Dawn episode
© Saban Entertainment

took over the studio, the timing couldn't have been more perfect. The company had reached a point where it needed to start going after other properties and production deals. And that isn't what he does. Jim really does more of the day-to-day management and talent recruiting, while I'm better at making acquisitions and trying to build relationships with distributors and creators."

From Different Directions

Both Jim and Stephanie were

to get "a real job." As his father was a film editor with his own company, he "knew how to pop track and do a lot of other things. So, I got a job at Warner Bros. as an apprentice editor," eventually becoming "a full fledged editor." After he worked with Friz Freleng putting together such compilation films as Daffy Duck's Fantastic Island, he was hired in 1984 as studio production manager at Marvel Productions, where he stayed until 1991, eventually becoming Senior Vice President of Production.

Despite being one of Hollywood's most successful animation couples, Jim and Stephanie Graziano have not been able to work together as much as they would like.

born and raised in the Los Angeles area, but they came into animation and animation management from different directions.

For his part, Jim had bummed around a few years after graduating from the University of Idaho in 1975, where he had gone on a football scholarship (playing tight end) and majored in Physical Education. In 1978, he finally decided

Those were Marvel's "big years," Jim recalls, "when they did The Transformers, Muppet Babies and My Little Pony."

On the other hand, Stephanie's entry into animation was (for a woman) more conventional. In 1972, right after high school, she got a job as an inker at Hanna-Barbera. She earned an A.A. degree in Advertising from Los

Angeles Valley College, and went on to UCLA to study Fine Arts, all while continuing to work in animation. She recalls that, "I was at a point in the business where it was thriving. I was freelancing for two or three places, while working during the day at Hanna-Barbera. It became such a lucrative situation that I thought, 'Well, I can always go back to school!'"

She left college and decided to "pursue various avenues and tried to become more versatile." She became an ink and paint supervisor at Ruby-Spears, while, on her own, learned all she could about camera and editing.

At this time, American studios were beginning to send ink and paint to Asia in an effort to cut costs. She "did not really want the work to go over there, but I knew that it was going to happen and wanted to know exactly what they were capable of." Thus, she "volunteered three or four times to go overseas to set up shows for them."

Stephanie became studio manager for Tom Carter, before going to Marvel in 1984 as a production manager. Two years later, she got her first producing assignment (The Humanoids), and then started working in development with Margaret Loesch.



The Land Before Time 2
© MCA/Universal Home Video



The Tick

© Sunbow Entertainment

When Loesch left to start the Fox Children's Network, Stephanie went along as Director of Animation Programming and Production. When Jim started Graz in 1992, she stayed on at Fox, but helped him out with administrative tasks in her spare time. After Jim went to Universal, Stephanie stepped in to run Graz full-time.

Expanding the Studio

At Universal, Jim oversaw production on such shows as Beethoven, Shelly Duvall's Bedtime Stories and Earthworm Jim, along with three made-for-video sequels to The Land Before Time. Meanwhile, Graz, under Stephanie's direction, expanded from a studio for hire to the point where it had an ownership interest in half of its projects, as well as expanded into such areas as home videos (Cathy), video games (Shadoan) and TV commercials.

By last year, Graz had reached their long term goal of having an ownership interest in half their productions (with the other half being done on a for hire basis). Stephanie states that, "I didn't really see it getting too much bigger, or it probably wouldn't have been as enjoyable in the same way. I really anticipated its future being more of a maintenance base than a growth base."

At the same time, the animation market was also changing, as the industry was becoming increasingly dominated by the major studios. As a result, Stephanie says, "it will be interesting to see how small, independent studios who want to retain ownership survive in a market, where the big guys want to own everything. It was something that I really couldn't analyze at Graz, but it was something interesting to consider."

Jim concurs, feeling that while Graz would have been able to maintain its work flow and perhaps "grown a bit," but wonders what would have happened, with "all the big guns really gearing up."

For the Grazianos, their new position means stepping up from modest budgets set by clients, to dictating their own budgets and schedules. However, they plan to continue the same creator friendly approach that had contributed so much to Graz' success. In this, the Grazianos are part of a new generation of studio managers who have transformed the creative environment. As such, they have helped television animation, especially, turn away from the factory approach initially heralded by

the likes of Hanna-Barbera in the early days of Saturday morning animation.

At Graz, there was a conscious effort to cast each artist for each show, while encouraging interaction between the crew in order to promote greater creativity. Stephanie notes that their new studio will be planned with "production units that will be defined by, in almost all cases, individual offices on the exterior. In almost all cases, individual offices, with a living room setting in the center. That will act as a meeting place, a communications center, with screening capabilities, that will encourage people to interact together and be part of a team." (It's interesting to note, in this regard, as Jim points out that, "there are no titles within any division of DreamWorks.")

It will be interesting to see how small, independent studios survive in a market where the big guys want to own everything.

Given the fact that no shows have yet been given the green light at DreamWorks Television Animation, it is too early to tell how the new operation will fare. But given its all-star management line up—including Jim and Stephanie—it is an operation which in many ways seems to have everything going for it.

Harvey Deneroff, in addition to his duties as Editor of Animation World Magazine, edits and publishes The Animation Report, an industry newsletter, which has taken over operation of the annual Ojai Animation Conference.

Out of the Animation Ghetto: Clare Kitson and Her Muffia

by Jill McGreal

Animation moves around the globe finding the right conditions of production and digging in for the duration. At various times, and for various reasons, the best work has to come out of America, Canada, Eastern Europe...wherever the climate permitted.

Sometime in the eighties it landed in Britain, where animators began to produce increasingly confident work resulting in the recent run of international prizes. At the recent Pre-Selection Committee for the Zagreb World Festival of Animated Film, now thankfully back on form after a rocky war-torn patch, there were 450 entries to the competition section, of which 133 were from Britain—by far the largest number for any one country.

The standard of this work was high and the range of subject matter, techniques and individual styles stretched across the board. There were robust showings of experimental, political, personal and narrative work commissioned or produced by a host of national and local funding bodies.

It's an interesting time for any filmmaker to be at work in the UK. In the past decade and a half, along with other Western democracies, we have, according to the pundits, entered a new post-modern era. In Britain, this era was ushered in by Thatcherism in 1979, where the population is still held in the moral grip of its right-wing politics of conviction—



Dolly Pond
from Pond Life

despite the succession of scandals, resignations, sackings, by-election losses and a distinct change in the political atmosphere.

But not all of the social change of the last decade has been for the worse. The trickle down effect of the 1974 Sexual Discrimination Act began to speed up as the eighties-style ideologies promoted individualism wherever it came from—post-feminism arrived as part of the post-modern package.

Deregulation of the public service sector—a Thatcherite imperative and definitive of the pattern of social change in the UK over the past decade—started in a small way when Channel 4 began transmitting on November 2, 1982; it was a daring move, which increased the number of television channels available in the UK from three to four!

Animation for Adults

The channel's mandate to deliver innovative work to specialized audiences was interpreted generously and, as part of a wider scheduling experiment, animation for adults was given its own commissioning department. It's impossible not to link this development with the growth of animation in

the UK; indeed, Channel 4's role in the benign circle of funding and stimulation of talent has been recognized at all levels.

Narrative is no longer the province of male filmmakers—if it ever was.

Channel 4's Commissioning Editor for Animation, Clare Kitson, continues to commission difficult but award-winning work, much of which has been directed by women. For reasons adequately covered elsewhere, and especially in Jayne Pilling's introduction to her book, *Women and Animation* (BFI, 1992), animation has always been able to accommodate women. So, the present animation boom in the UK, taking place in a late 20th century climate which is generally more supportive of women, has sustained many female directors.

Over the last few years, women have worked in every genre: personal—Karen Watson's *Daddy's Little Piece of Dresden China* (1988) and her new film *Sweet Heart* (1995) address the issues of childhood sexual abuse and anorexia from an autobiographical point of view; lyrical—Susan Young's *Carnival* (1985), Karen Kelly's *Egoli* (1989) and *Stressed* (1994); documentary—Marjut Rimminen's *Some Protection* (1987), the Leeds Animation Workshop's *Through the Glass Ceiling* (1995) both to do with the treatment of women, in prison in Rimminen's film and at work in the Leeds film;

experimental—as in Vera Neubauer's *The World of Children* (1984) or her *Lady of the Lake* (1995); abstract—Erica Russell's *Feet of Song* (1989) and *Triangle* (1995); narrative without dialogue—Joan Ashworth's *The Web*, Alison Snowden's *Second Class Mail* (1984); narrative with dialogue—Sarah Ann Kennedy's *Nights* (1992) or any of Candy Guard's many short films.

Kitson's Muffia

Narrative is no longer the province of male filmmakers—if it ever was. Certainly, when Kitson's budget was increased in 1994 and she modified her policies to include series work, she felt that only Sarah Ann Kennedy and Candy Guard were able to write dialogue and structure narrative sufficiently well to move forward in this direction. As a result of this bold move, Kitson has been accused, unfairly, of running a 'Muffia'; but, in fact, her decision to move into series production, a program space previously occupied exclusively by producers of children's programming, has once again extended the boundaries of animation.

Animation is perhaps, for both, a route through the glass ceiling.

In gratitude Crapston Villas, Kennedy's model animation series about the flat-dwelling inhabitants of a run down Victorian house in a seedy London street, won Best New Program in the 1996 Broadcast Awards (Broadcast is a major British trade magazine), and for the first time, animation went up against live action and won—a major coup for Kitson and Channel 4. It's unsurprising, therefore,

that Kitson's irritation is only half-concealed when she notes that the BBC has now also started commissioning adult animation series.

Pond Life

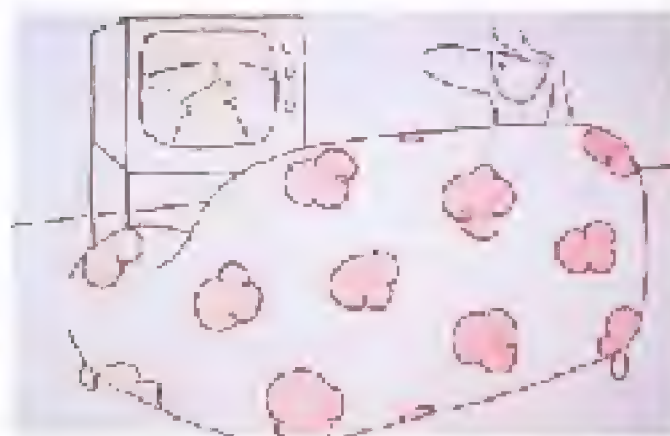
Kitson's real move forward is into mainstream comedy and out of the animation ghetto. She has been so successful that she will now have to watch her back for product-hungry comedy commissioning editors straying onto her patch. Neither Crapston Villas nor Candy Guard's *Pond Life* are Grand Prix winners at traditional animation festivals like Annecy or Zagreb—the source of many awards, honors and prizes for Channel 4. But both Kennedy and Guard have expressed a desire to move into live action. Animation is perhaps, for both, a route

participants had identified *Pond Life* as to do with 'women issues,' whereas I believe that the issues that Candy addresses are universal."

Kitson was being disingenuous. The issues—career, driving test, clothes, friends, rock music, holidays—are universal, but the tale on them is assuredly not—women may go awkward, silent and tongue-tied the minute they think a bloke fancies them (see *I Want A Boyfriend ... Or Do I?*), but men get loud, show off and clown about in front of the girl they fancy ... (Or do they?).

Not that Guard thinks of herself as a feminist. "It's not a word that I use about myself. I'm much more likely to describe myself as a socialist," is her initial response to my question; but knowing that I will ask her if she is a feminist,

Guard has consulted her boyfriend on the matter, who clearly thinks she is one—"Because I get cross about things," she says. "I get especially cross about women's role in the film industry, both as actresses and creators. Taking sex scenes, for



Pond Life

through the glass ceiling.

Candy Guard has been working on *Pond Life* since 1992, when the pilot, *I Want a Boyfriend ... Or Do I?*, was co-commissioned by S4C and Channel 4. The 13 x 11 minute series premieres on Channel 4 later this year. Kitson put the *Pond Life* concept into research before giving the series the green light. "When results of the research came back," Kitson said, sounding surprised, "the male

instance, in which male directors forever have women bouncing up and down on top of the male actors, presumably so that you see their tits better. Even in *Toy Story*, which I really enjoyed, I felt the filmmakers could have tried harder. Why did all the toys have to be male?"

Guard respects Kitson's judgment although she doesn't necessarily always agree with it. In fact, when her friend and col-



Crapston Villas

The dialogue sparkles with smut and filth—so it's more British.

league, Sarah Ann Kennedy, was commissioned to make Crapston Villa before Pond Life got to go ahead, Guard confesses to being dismayed. Crapston Villas offers a different kind of humor than Pond Life. It's more lavatorial—the dialogue sparkles with smut and filth—so it's more British and perhaps, for that reason, easier to commission.

A More Daring Kind of Comedy

Guard likens her work to American series like Roseanne, Friends, and Ellen. And it's true that Pond Life, which centers on the angst-ridden life of Dolly Pond, explores issues in a more personal way than Crapston Villas, where the humor is spread across a broader social canvas. And, as is well known, the British can poke

fun at the idiosyncrasies of their class system, but they get coy about showing their emotions. In this sense Pond Life takes a step forward into a more daring, international kind of comedy.

What Pond Life and Crapston Villas share is attitude to women's issues in which female desire is OK and political correctness is a thing of the past. Crapston, in particular, revels in the shagging culture of the nineties. Take, for instance, this slice of dialogue from Episode 3. Marge, the late thirty-something mum, who lives at the top of Crapston Villas with her delinquent, glue-sniffing children and senile old mum, is having a telephone conversation with her black female friend, Denise. They are both smoking and drinking:

Denise: "What you need is a good shag" (laughter). Marge: "Yeah, I quite fancy a handyman (gales of laughter). I've got a few odd jobs that need doing (shrieks of laughter). I don't care what he looks like as long as he can screw a few things in for me (more Shrieks). I'll advertise for an odd job man preferably with a large tool" (more shrieks). Denise: "Or what about, 'caffolders wanted, quick erection only, site in desperate need of attention,'" (collapse into hysterical laughter).

Scaffolders wanted, quick erection only, site in desperate need of attention.

Pond Life takes a different route into equally taboo subjects as Dolly Pond pours out her neuroses to anyone who will listen. But neither series is afraid of representing women. The moral high

ground, once occupied by first-generation feminists, in which all representation was offensive, has given way to feistier generation of women who have more self-esteem and are, therefore, less fearful of their self-image, and less moralistic and judgmental in their attitudes to their own sex.

Guard certainly doesn't think of herself as a feminist filmmaker, at least not consciously. On the other hand, it wouldn't have been possible for her to write Pond Life for a central male character. "So, in fairness, you can't really blame men for writing scripts with strong male leads," she remarks confidently. She wonders, though, whether Pond Life would have been made if the Commissioning Editor at Channel 4 had been a man...a question which thankfully, we are not able to answer.



Crapston Villas

Jill McGreal is an animation producer at Code Name: The Animation Agency, in Hampshire, England.

Rose Bond: An Animator's Profile

by Rita Street



Director and Animator, Rose Bond

I've always drawn horses," says the reserved yet captivating Rose Bond, an award-winning animator from Portland, Oregon. "Teachers picked out my horse drawings to hold up. In kindergarten, at a back-to-school night, all my horse drawings were up on one board—which I thought was a little unfair to the other children." But no matter how embarrassed she might have been for being singled out, Bond remembers with fondness the affect it had on her mother. When she walked in the room and saw Rose's drawings, Bond's mother sighed and said, "Oh, those horses!"

Mrs. Bond's reaction is one that has been shared by many when first introduced to her daughter's animated shorts. Bond's horses have a mythical

presence, as if they reside at once between two planes—the

Bond's horses have a mythical presence, as if they reside at once between two planes ...

reality we know and the reality of Faerie. Bond's major films are based on the myths and legends of pre-Christian Ireland, a time when the world of Faerie and the powers of witchcraft were considered a part of every day life.

Says Bond of her stories, "The pre-Christian Irish had a very non-Western pantheon of gods. They believed you could be walking past a hillside and if it happened to be the hundredth day past a certain stage of the

moon, for instance, you could slip into another dimension. For them there was little difference between gods and mortals." Bond also emphasizes a strong connection for the early Irish between humans and nature, a connection that allows for shape shifting and metamorphosis, a process that Bond has always been drawn to animate.

But Bond's films are about more than just beautiful horses changing into other animal forms. They address universal topics affecting humanity today through legends of the past. Bond's oeuvre questions the importance of a dominate system of power. Should men rule over women? Should women rule over men? Is there another middle-ground or middle-way?

The Light of Inspiration

In her epic trilogy of three Irish legends, *Cerridwen's Gift*,



Deirdre's Choice

© Paint-on-Film Animation by Rose Bond, 1995

35mm Film frames from *Mallacht Macha (Macha's Curse)*

© Paint-on-Film Animation by Rose Bond, 1990

(1987), *Mallacht Macha* (or *Macha's Curse*, 1990) and *Deirdre's Choice* (1995), heroines struggle with a world that is shape shifting itself, moving from a matriarchal to patriarchal base. The white witch Cerridwen, whose daughter is pure and bright, attempts to bestow the light of inspiration upon her troubled and disagreeable son. Her potion boils in a cauldron for one year, but just as it is ready, it bubbles over and splatters the lips of her servant boy. Enraged, thinking that the boy has spoiled the potion, Cerridwen begins a marvelous chase after the frightened servant, in which both change shapes between animals of land, sea and sky. The boy makes the unwitting mistake of shifting into the form of a small seed which Cerridwen, in the shape of a hen, promptly eats. The seed grows in her belly until she bears a child that has the glow of inspiration on his brow. When the child grows to manhood and becomes known as

prophet he remembers Cerridwen, the mother of knowledge who delivered upon him the light of the world.

In *Macha's Curse*, the goddess appears in the form of a gray mare and discovers a handsome man living alone in her woods. She takes on human form and weds the man, but bids him never say anything of it to other mortals. At a festival, the man boasts that his wife can run faster than all the horses of the King. Insulted, the King arrests the man and sends his men to find the offensive woman, the goddess Macha, who is now pregnant by her man. The King demands that the woman, even in her burdened condition, run against his horses. Macha does so and wins the race but curses the men of the village for nine generations with the weakness of a mother in labor. It is their just due for choosing a "king's might over a mother's right."

And in the most recent short, *Deirdre's Choice*, a girl child still in

the womb is Druid-predicted to be trouble for the King. To show his might over even the Fates, the King decrees that when the girl grows up he will take her for his own. But, when Deirdre comes of age, she falls in love and escapes with her lover on a long pilgrimage through distant lands. They are finally discov-

ered by the King who has the lad slain. Deirdre becomes the King's woman, but to show her power over even his authority, she takes her own life.

Something Magical, Something Eternal

Each film depicts a struggle for the right to "be," for the right to live freely, for the ultimate power that is in every woman, and every man, to stand on equal ground and declare, "In me is something magical, something eternal." Bond declared just such a right in her own life by steadfastly allowing herself the privilege to grow as an artist.

In college she had struggled with art. Her creative passions ran deep, but she found no mentor to guide her through the reality of becoming a professional so she set her art aside.

"I was very disenchanted with college. I had no role models. It seemed that the only way to succeed as an artist was to be an academic. I simply didn't

understand how a career in art worked. It wasn't until my late twenties when I took an animation night course at NorthWest Film Center that discovered where drawing could go."

Even though she was working a full-time job as an educational administrator, she began to work at night on her animated films. Finally the urge to fill in her own gaps of knowledge as a filmmaker led her to follow her heart and return to school. She took a leave without pay and attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to complete her MFA. As she says, "my art was calling." At Art School she finished *Macha* and created a film installation called *The Peep Show* at the Name Gallery.

Says Bond, *The Peep Show* was a take off on the porno booth where you step in a small dark room, put in your quarter and see a show. In a three minute cycle, she animates from *A New View of a Women's Body*—presenting a revolutionary view on the female sexual arousal with the cycled engorgement of an intricate maze of tissues and capillaries; an interior felt but never seen.

A Very Avant-Garde

Approach

After graduation, Bond returned to her work with the Portland Public Schools, but added the role of animation instructor at Northwest Film Center to her list of professional duties. Today, Bond takes a very avant-garde approach to her classwork, teaching students the basics of squash and stretch, but asking them to apply this knowledge to non-traditional forms of animation. Bond, a "direct" animator, encourages experimentation in all forms, including



"Stone Man" Rock Art Animation
from *Sacred Encounters* installation
© Rose Bond, 1995

work with computers.

Says Bond, "I create my animation in flipbooks, then ink each page directly onto clear film leader. After I ink the whole film, and I usually have very little cutting, I end up with a big roll of about 400 feet with frame lines marked on it. Then I color it. I never project that, I just take it straight to the lab which prints

The Peep Show was a take off on the porno booth where you step in a small dark room, put in your quarter and see a show.

each frame two to three times [Bond animates at 12 frames per second] and that becomes the master. To ink, I use a mixture of pens and watercolors. There's a type of German pen I like as well and then I use an alcohol base dye for my warm palette."

But, Bond is now interested in trying her painterly animation process on the computer. She is dabbling with Fractal Design's *Painter* software, which allows for the look and feel of a real painter's toolset within the digital format. In a sense the computer seems to fit with the new era of work Bond hopes to move in to.

"No more trilogies," she says. "I'm at a period of my life where I'm reconsidering where I'm going with my personal work. My inclination is to go back away from story. Not exactly pure visual poetry, but something more experimental, something that leaves an impression."

And knowing Bond, that impression is sure to be "lasting."

Rita Street, the founder of *Women in Animation* and former editor and publisher of *Animation Magazine*, is now a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.

Central And East-European Women Animators

by Marcin Gizycki

In the realm of communist regimes, theory and practice belonged to two different worlds: that of propaganda and that of harsh reality. The first pretended to be the universe of utopia, good will and justice. The second did not masquerade as anything but a patriarchal bureaucratic machine.

It was Lenin who stated after the success of the Revolution that, "In the land of the Soviets, every housewife must be able to rule the state." And it was also Lenin who announced that film was, "the most important of the arts." According to the logic of this rhetoric, Soviet cinema was supposed to be an oasis for women filmmakers in the male dominated ocean of the world's film industry.

Actually, the beginnings were quite promising. Although women did not play the most prominent roles in the policy making bodies, they were particularly visible in all kinds of artistic activities blossoming in the years after the Revolution. Women painters, like Natalia Goncharova, Olga Rozanova, Lyubov Popova and Varvara Stepanova were

There was no other country where women artists achieved so much in such a short time.



Sněžný Muz, Petra Fundova (1986)

among the leaders of the avant-garde. Poet Marina Tsvetaeva enjoyed a popularity equaled only by Mayakovsky's. Women filmmakers, Esfir Shub, Lili Brik and Olga Preobrazhenskaya, although working in the shadow of Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dovzhenko or Vertov, contributed significantly to the Soviet cinema of the 1920s.

Too Good to Last

Even if men still prevailed in these domains, one can not deny that there was no other country where women artists achieved so much in such a short time. This was too good to last and soon many women shared the fate of the majority of the avant-garde community. There was no longer a place for progressive ideals. Those who did not conform to the requirements of Socialist Real-

ism emigrated or spent the rest of their lives in oblivion. Many perished during the witch hunts of the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Vera Ermolaeva's story epitomizes the destiny of thousands of people, men and women, who suffered and died only because they happened to live in the wrong place at the wrong time. An abstract painter, a splendid illustrator and a stage designer, she was also one of the closest allies of Kazimir Malevich in Vitebsk and Petrograd. In 1934, she was arrested and deported because her brother had been involved in "suspect" political circles many years before. A progressive illness, which led to the amputation of her legs, did not persuade the authorities to release her from exile in Siberia, where she eventually died in

1938.

At the time when this extraordinary woman was suffering unspeakably in forced isolation, some of her former mates from the defunct avant-garde were producing countless pictures and posters attributing new roles to men and women in socialist society. The representations of the new Soviet woman were mainly confined to one area: agriculture. A woman on a tractor, with a sickle, resting after mowing, always smiling and happy. Women did not disappear entirely from the public life during the Stalinist years.

One can recall Vera Muchina, one of the most



Katharina by Katarzyna Latallo, Poland



Little Giraffe by Teresa Badzian, Poland

prolific producers of idealized portrayals of Soviet people. It was she who sculpted the statue of the "Worker and Collective Farm Girl," which became the trademark of Soviet cinema. But in real life gender equality in the film industry no longer existed, not only under Stalin, but also in the years to come. Unfortunately, this is particularly evident in the field of animation.

None of the women animators in the Soviet Union achieved the international recognition enjoyed by some outstanding, although not numerous, female feature film directors, like Larisa Shepitko or Kira Muratova. It was only in recent times that animated films made by women in Russia (for example Tatyana Jitkovskaya and Natalia Orlova) started to appear regularly at film

festivals.

As to my native country, it is worth mentioning that a woman actually inaugurated experimental filmmaking in Poland. Franciszka Themerson, together with her husband Stefan, made seven short films between 1930 and 1945. Among them she co-directed *The Eye and the Ear*, one of the most interesting abstract films ever done. (It was actually made in England at the end of World

War II, for the Film Unit of the Polish Government in exile).

Addressing Women's Issues

It would be unfair to say that women did not have any chance as animators/directors in communist Poland. The list of those who made significant films starts with Halina Bielinska (the co-author of an excellent and innovative *Change of Guard* in 1958) and ends at Ewa Bibanska, whose *Incomplete Portrait* (1982) is one of a very few films that directly addresses women's issues.

In between, to mention only some of the most important names, are Katarzyna Latallo, Zofia Oldak, Zofia Oraczewska, Alina Maliszewska, Alina Skiba, and Joanna Zamojdo. None of them has imprinted her presence

in the deeper memory of foreign specialists on the subject. A situation that can be blamed, at least in part, on the male-oriented promotional policies of Film Polski, the state run film agency. And there were always women behind men, writing scripts for their husband-directors, helping them as art directors, and working as an army of anonymous aides.

The fact is, though, that there

is no woman director in Poland who has gained as much recognition as the leading male animators: Lenica, Kijowicz, Szczechura

or Giersz. Now, the situation is even worse, for with the collapse of the communist regime state funding for film production has dropped radically. The newly born capitalism is not ready yet to support cultural institutions and it is quite possible that it will never do so. As a result, the auteur form of animation is in jeopardy. Not a great prospect for animators of either gender. The outlook for other former communist countries looks very much the same.

The Czech Republic seems to be doing the best. Among the group of animators who still manage to pursue their own ideas are an impressive number of women. In a catalogue of an exhibition of Czechoslovak animators which took place in Prague in 1988, 31 out of 76 active animators listed

were women. Many of them started their careers in the 1980s, including Lucie Dvorakova, Petra Fundova, Michaela Pavlatova, Milada Sukdolakova, Eva Sykoro-va, Zuzana Vorlickova, Sarlota Zahradkova and Sarka Zikova.

One has to remember, though, that women's animation has a strong tradition in the Czech and Slovak republics. One of the founders of animated film there after WWII was Hermína Týrlová, a splendid puppeteer whose international fame would have been much greater, if she did not devote herself entirely to children's films.

There is no woman director in Poland who has gained as much recognition as the leading male animators.

Expressing Their Attitudes

The common attitude in the West that there are no important female directors in Central and Eastern Europe diminishes the role of those splendid artists who, despite obstacles, have made their way into the industry. What is absent, though, is the sort of distinct, personal, almost confessional current within women's animation, as represented in the U.S. by Susan Pitt, Kathy Rose, Caroline Leaf or Emily Hubley. The reason might be cultural: discussing problems of one's body and soul in public in Slavic countries can be embarrassing. Instead, artists prefer to look for ways of expressing their attitudes by more universal metaphors.

Finally, when dealing with women's cinema in the former

Soviet Bloc countries, feminist oriented critics in the West are inevitably surprised that so many women directors there do not want to be called feminists, even if they address women's issues. I might suggest a possible answer to this phenomenon.

Sixty odd years of communist propaganda in the Soviet Union (44 in the satellite countries) has led to a certain distrust in words, especially those associated with ideologically charged social the-



The Etude From An Album
by Michaela Pavlatova

ories. Listening to the postulates of the Polish Women's League, the only legal women's rights organization under communism, one could get the impression that it did not differ much from the agenda of feminist movements in the West. Representatives of the League were regularly sent to international conferences, where they spoke about the equality of men and

women in the socialist world. Their words were not meant to represent reality, but to substitute for it. And they did. The regime was not afraid of big words and it knew how to manipulate them.

Borrowing terminology from post-modern discourse, one would say that what the communist regimes did not suffer from was a lack of "grand narratives." In fact, there were too many of them. At least for intellectuals who subconsciously developed an immune system to fight their omnipotent presence. In the post-modern world of post-communist societies, the feminist vocabulary sounds to some ears like one of these already known narratives.

Do not be bewildered, therefore, when a Russian, or Polish, or Hungarian filmmaker tells you: "I am not a feminist, but ..." They are not lesser artists just because they say this.

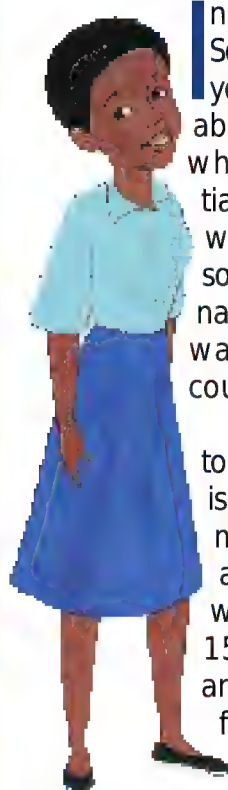


Sfinga, Lucie Dvorakova (1989)

Marcin Gizycki is a Polish art historian, art critic and former Editor-In-Chief for Animafilm magazine. He has taught at Rhode Island School of Design since 1988.

Meena and Sara: Two Characters in Search of a Brighter Future for Women

by Neill McKee and Christian Clark



Original artwork of
UNICEF's new
character, Sara.
© UNICEF

In Eastern and Southern Africa a young girl figure is about to be born who has the potential to become as well known as Nelson Mandela. Her name is Sara and she was conceived in ten countries.

Sara is a cartoon character. She is the product of 20 months of research and development work involving over 150 writers, artists, and researchers from Eritrea and Ethiopia in the North, to the Cape of Good Hope in the South. Sara, her

UNICEF committees in United States, Europe and Japan. Meena has been a joint project of UNICEF and Hanna-Barbera Cartoons. Sara is still looking for a corporate partner.

UNICEF recognizes the power mass media can have in providing a catalyst for social change. Meena and Sara are examples of an "enter-education" strategy, which seeks to harness the drawing power of popular entertainment to convey educational messages. These initiatives illustrate how creative and exciting stories can be used to promote social issues in an appealing and provocative way. Meena is quickly becoming a household name and a popular film star in South Asia. In December 1995, she was identified by Newsweek magazine as "one of the actors to emerge on the world's stage in 1996."

Role Models

Both Meena and Sara are uplifting role models for girls. They are empowered girl figures who are able to act, to ask questions and seek solutions to the problems which face them and their friends and family. And their problems are many. In South Asia and Africa, there are many customs and traditions which affect the development of female Children. In India, a million fetuses are detected and aborted each year simply because they are female. In both regions there is much more value and attention given to the boy from in the first

hour of life and this continues through childhood.

The drawing power of popular entertainment can convey educational messages.

From a young age the girl must serve male family members, care for younger children, fetch water and firewood, wash the clothes and cook. Her life becomes a "nightmare that never ends." The girl is often seen as someone who is "just passing through" the household. She will get married and move out whereas it is believed that the boy will support his parents in their old age.

As the girl grows, the disparities in treatment and status are



Meena and her friend Mithu
© UNICEF

friends and family, and the characters and happenings in her community are also the result of discussions with over 5000 people in villages and slums throughout this vast region. It is their insights and reflection which have shaped the adventures of Sara, an adolescent girl between 13 and 15 years of age.

Sara has a similar beginning to Meena, a younger girl cartoon character from South Asia. Both projects have been launched by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) with financial contributions from the Government of Norway and

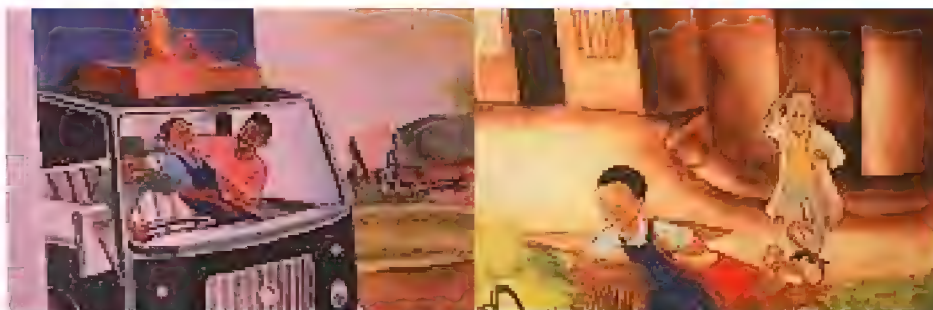
compounded. Death rates are higher among female children. When

sickness strikes, male children will be taken to hospital sooner, while girls have to wait to the very last moment, which is sometimes too late.

In many countries, fewer girls enter school and more girls are "pushed out" at an early age. This disadvantage in educational opportunities also robs the girl of her chance to be a child as school is one of the only places where she can socialize and play with other children and learn essential life skills such as communication, negotiation, problem solving and conflict resolution.

Another aspect is the socialization process of the young girl in the home, school and wider community. She acquires a sense of inferiority, resulting in a negative self-concept. It is reinforced by the way girls and women are defined in textbooks and various media. The overall result is a limited perception of her own capabilities and possibilities.

In many parts of Africa the problem of teenage motherhood is endemic. Girls are often not yet ready for motherhood, physically or psychologically, and are thrown out of the educational system. Their situation becomes even more worrying in the context of the AIDS pan-



Sara and her pet monkey Zingo, shown in a victim situation requiring assistance and protection.

© UNICEF

forced marriage, polygamy and multiple partner relationships all have contributed to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. The adolescent girl is two to seven times more likely to be HIV positive than the adolescent boy.

Striking a Common Chord

This is a negative and depressing picture. While it is possible to present the female child as a victim requiring assistance and protection, it is more important to recognize her potential as a leading agent in promoting development. In both the Meena and Sara Communication initiatives, UNICEF decided to create a role model and set of common stories which would provide motivation for a way towards acceptable solutions.

But how can cartoons address such deep-rooted problems? In viewing live action films, people in multi-ethnic environments respond to cultural and social cues such as dress, facial features, language and accents, housing and vegetation which may alienate and

proper formative research, animated film can be used to "strike a common chord" across a diverse region. Common characters, backgrounds and stories can be found

which belong to everybody's neighborhood.

In creating the series, research revealed the need to remain within the realm of realism in order to maintain a credible message source. Therefore, Meena's parrot, Mithu, only ever repeats what he has heard and Sara's pet monkey, Zingo, does not talk. She only mimics and gestures in sympathy with Sara's emotions. Both animals are extensions of the girls' egos. They can do things which the Meena and Sara would like to do but which would be disrespectful, for a girl to do in Asian or African society. Therefore, cultural sensitivity is maintained. By steering this fine line between reality and fantasy, these stories remain both relevant and exciting to the target audiences. They are their stories. What the research revealed is that the target audiences don't have a vocabulary for 'cartoon' versus "live action." The Meena and Sara films are viewed as stories on their situations and lives, as opposed to the live action fantasies churned out by Hollywood or Bollywood.

While it is possible to present the female child as a victim, it is more important to recognize her potential as a leading agent in promoting development.

demic, which is hitting both regions harder than any other area of the world. In Eastern and Southern Africa, rape, adolescent pregnancies, female genital mutilation,

distract them. They may be fascinated by what they see but may miss the main message or conclude that the situations posed are "someone else's problem." However, with

The Flagship Medium

Also, animated film can portray difficult social issues and values in sensitive, non-threatening ways, without losing message impact. The stories and messages provide a "hook" into the culture without alienating or threatening cultural integrity. In addition, animated films



A storyboard session for the UNICEF South African Initiative.
© UNICEF

can be dubbed and produced in many languages at little cost, making them useful across a large population base.

In both Meena and Sara initiatives, the animated film is the "flagship" medium through which a set of characters and core set of stories "come to life," capturing the attention and imagination of audiences and providing a creative focus. However, multi-media dissemination is essential to reach target audiences who often do not have access to television, video or film. A Meena radio series has been broadcast in Asia through the BBC Bangla service and the BBC Africa Service will broadcast a five language Sara series beginning in June 1996. In addition, comic books, story books, audio cassettes, posters, users' and facilitators' guides are either available or in planning.

However, films and videos have further reach than is often assumed. India has had satellite television with community viewing stations since the 1970s. There are also growing informal channels of video distribution — associations, religious groups and commercial outlets, for example. Videos are shown in public places such as restaurants and bars and "video theaters" are quickly growing in small communities. In some countries there are mobile film or video units owned by private firms or government.

Also in the plans for both

Meena and Sara is the merchandising of products. In Bangladesh Meena textiles, ceramics, dolls, writing products and greeting cards are already being pilot marketed and educational games are planned. Such products have the potential to extend the reach of Sara and Meena images and messages. They also may have a role in fund raising, thereby sustaining the projects, for it is recognized that changing the societal position and view of female children is a long-term endeavor.

A First Step

Broadcast or video viewing is important in developing awareness and knowledge as a first step to behavioral change information is provided and awareness enhanced. We can also motivate people through entertaining Program formats. However, in the Meena and Sara episodes, an attempt has been made to address all behavioral change factors. The episodes are informative and motivational, through entertaining stories which are based on careful research into traditional and modern values. But they also address the life skills and enabling environment factors which are so often omitted change behavior or bring in children.

Finally, both initiatives have involved a great deal of capacity building. The design of the Meena character, character models, backgrounds, storyboards and post production has all been undertaken in South Asia under the supervision of Ram Mohan of Light Box Moving Pictures, Bombay. Light Box has also produced some of the episodes from start to finish although

Hanna Barbera Manila-based studio, Fil Cartoons has produced the bulk of the animation to date. South Asian artists and researchers have increased their skills through their involvement.

Ram Mohan and the others of the South Asian team - Mira Aghi, the chief researcher in New Delhi; Rachel Carnegie, Meena's main creative force and former coordinator; Nuzhat Shahzadi, researcher and trainer-disseminator based in Bangladesh - have all contributed to the training of African artists, writers and researchers in the Sara project. And such capacity building remains a major goal of both projects.

The Meena and Sara initiatives are two visible bright stars in the African and South Asian girls' otherwise troubled night sky. They demonstrate how animated film can become a force for social transformation.



A depiction of the South African picturesque landscape
© UNICEF

Neil McKee is the Senior Program Communication Officer for UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office based in Nairobi, Kenya. He is the author of *Social Mobilization and Social Marketing in Developing Communities*.

Christian Clark, former Information Officer in UNICEF Somalia, is now the Meena Project Coordinator for UNICEF in Katmandu, Nepal.

Women In Animation: Changing the World: Person by Person, Cel by Cel

by Rita Street



Rita Street, founder of Women in Animation
Marshall Armistead Photography

As my friend, veteran animator/producer Sue Kroyer says, "I'm not much of a joiner." Like Sue, I've never been overly fond of organizations which seems rather odd since I founded an International organization three years ago. I've also never been overly fond of the so-called Woman's Movement, which makes my position all the more contradictory since the organization I founded focuses on women's issues within the industry of animation.

Let me explain. To me organizations were only entities to pay dues to and receive newsletters or magazines from. My ideas concerning feminism were even more obtuse.

While I was growing up, my mother was busy working a full-time job and driving three hours

every other night to the nearest university in order to get her master's degree. My father and his cronies were my life and an overwhelming influence. When Dad said, even jokingly, that the Women's Movement was great for men, "let the women do all the work," I agreed. Those silly, silly women, wasn't housework more appropriate? I grew up thinking like a man, or at least like the old boys club my father belonged to, believing I had the right to do whatever I pleased, whenever I pleased and more power to me. Like a pet that grows up isolated from its own kind, I never realized the term "women" would eventually mean "me."

In the work place, I realized that no matter how smart, how efficient, how dynamic I was, it still took some extra genitals to land a really good salary or job that could provide me with even a modicum of self-respect. To get ahead, I couldn't act like a man as I once thought I could; I had to think like a woman and work like a woman. Like my mother, I had to drive forever and work myself to death to create even a glimmer of hope for a career.

Destroying oneself—paying dues beyond the price of imagination—I found was and is the only acceptable way for a woman to succeed in the workplace.

Like a pet that grows up isolated from its own kind, I never realized the term "women" would eventually mean "me."

When I finally landed a job that I really liked, with a boss who respected my abilities (as editor and eventually publisher of Animation Magazine for Terry Thoren), I realized that I still had to kill myself in order to gain respect from the animation community at large. During my three year stint with AniMag, I began to hear other women's stories, stories of discrimination that were far worse than my own. As I delved into the history of animation I found an industry that typically placed women in low paying, unsatisfying positions that kept their artistic talents bottled up. Female animators were cursed with a very real glass ceiling and female executives, although they had made it up the ladder (mainly due to the fact that there actually are some wonderful men in this area of entertainment with extraordinary foresight), they still had to work harder and longer than most of their male counterparts.

On The Brink of Disaster

At the same time that I began to understand the basic condi-



Sari Gennis, Lily Tomlin and John Kricfalusi at a WIA panel on Images of Women in Animation.

tion of many women in the industry, I realized that animation itself seemed to be on the brink of disaster. At the magazine, I was uniquely positioned to see the overwhelming amount of activity in the industry in 1993. New companies were sprouting up all over the globe in every genre of animation. Animation seemed to be moving in a million different directions at once.

As a person pondering, I can't take the drain of energy it takes to go in so many different directions all at once, so how could an industry? Could animation hold up to such a wave of activity without losing valuable momentum? Would such an upswing cause an equally dynamic downswing as it had in the past? I decided that this was indeed a danger. If the animation industry had no backbone, no spine if you will to support it, how could it continue to move forward?

The idea came to me to hold an industry-wide panel discussion regarding the future of animation. Animation Magazine would invite industry heads from all over the world to begin a dialogue about bringing the industry together, to support one another no matter what style they hap-

pened to be working in. Names of prominent men came to mind, to sit on this panel.

These men would, of course, come up with many great ideas; but after the panel ended and the audience and press went home, would they actually take action? I doubted that they would have either the time or the inclination. The only people I knew who would actually "act" on an "idea"—something not charted, mapped, graphed, storyboarded, approved, budgeted, sanctified or licensed—were my women friends. And thus the next thought, forming what I had never thought to form before—an organization dedicated to the needs of women called Women In Animation. Perhaps by working together, women could make a difference for themselves, for men and for animation.

Perhaps by working together, women could make a difference for themselves, for men and for animation.

A Safer Place for Cartoons

In November of 1993, I sent a

fax to 40 women and asked them to meet at my house. About 20 women attended, representing all areas of the animation

industry—Sue Kroyer, Lily Tomlin (voice over), Libby Simon (producer), Linda Miller (animator) Donna Ravitz and Ruth Clamptt (animation art), Jan Nagel and Jessie Ungerleider (publicity), Maureen Furniss (animation historian and publisher of Animation Journal), Becky Bristow (Dean, California Institute of the Arts). We sat on my floor, ate cookies and discussed whether or not we should found the organization now known as WIA. Of course, the answer to that question was an overwhelming yes.

We also firmly declared that this would not be an organization driven by feminist blindness. To help break the glass ceiling in animation for female artists, we would embrace the opposite sex and prove that together we could rise above issues of gender, race and handicaps. We would also be an organization dedicated to solidifying the world of animation. We would study the past and promote the future. We would, as Terry Thoren is so fond of saying, make the world a safer place for cartoons!

Over the months that followed, a Steering Committee was established to guide the organization as it moved through the

difficult path of establishing its non-profit status. Antran Manoogian, president of ASIFA-Hollywood was approached and together he and his board voted to make WIA a special project of their chapter. That meant that we could receive tax deductible donations before receiving our own non-profit status. It also meant that we had a bank account. (I would like to add here that WIA will always be indebted to ASIFA-Hollywood for all their efforts to help it grow. They continue to support us in every move we make.)

A simple mission statement was written defining our goals and a first general meeting was planned. Karen Schmidt (who is now Director of Recruiting and Training for Warner Bros. Feature

Tools of the Toons

Since that time, we have grown enormously. Our general meetings are held four times a year and sponsored by Warner Bros. Feature Animation. (Thanks to both Karen Schmidt and Senior Vice President of Operations, Michael Laney for their support.) These panel discussions have covered diverse topics such as development, computer animation, licensing, production management, writing for animation and the image of the female character in cartoons.

We have also expanded to include many different committees that service the needs of the membership and the needs of the industry. The Program Committee, in addition to organizing general meetings here in Los

years of animation at each of our general meetings and to begin an oral history program that would preserve the lives and times of these extraordinary individuals. Under Simon's guidance and because of her hard work, 20 women have now been interviewed on tape and/or on video. These interviews (which continue in both Los Angeles and New York) have been transcribed and will soon be available to researchers through the University of California, Los Angeles Library.

The Communications Committee publishes a quarterly newsletter recording the activities of members and the organization as a whole. The Youth & Education Committee, headed by Film Roman's Phyllis Craig, helps

young people make the jump from student to professional a reality by placing them in intern programs at several independent and major studios. The Independent Film Selection Committee is dedicated to providing a forum for the work of independent animators and the Public Services Committee is



Rita Street (2nd from left), CalArts instructor Maureen Selwood, Faith Hubley and Calico's Jan Nagel (on far right) at press preview hosted by WIA and KCET for the Animated Women TV series, along with two KCET representatives.

Animation, and who was then at Disney) arranged a large screening room for our meeting. Over one hundred women showed up at Disney Feature Animation for our first gathering which consisted of screenings of new work by women. We actually had to turn some women and men away at the door.

Angeles, has developed a series of workshops open to the public called the "Tools of the Toons" series. The first workshop ran last fall and focused on the art of pitching story ideas.

On the suggestion of Sue Kroyer and Libby Simon, a Historical Committee was organized to honor women from the early

working to make a difference the world over through the art of animation.

WIA currently boasts one chapter. Founded by the Cartoon Network's Director of Programming, Linda Simensky, WIA-NY is extremely active. In the next few months, when the non-profit status is received for WIA Interna-

tional, Los Angeles will form its own chapter. Other chapters based in major cities around the world will soon follow.

No Longer Iffy

I have learned a great deal since I started the organization three years ago. I am no longer "iffy" about organizations; I love them. At least... this one. All the women who I have had the opportunity to meet and work with have caused the organization (and myself) to blossom. It has become a thrill of mine to sneak around the outskirts of a crowd bubbling over with enthusiasm during the "networking" portion of a general meeting and hear just how well the organization is working for people. Men and women are open and friendly and thrilled to be finding out what is going on with friends at other companies around town. Members discuss problems and offer insights. There's even some storytelling from the good ol' days. It seems that barriers are broken between people the moment they walk in the door.

All ages attend. I've seen 10 year-olds and 80 year-olds sitting

in the same row. And all ages learn, think, remember, hope and go home with the urge to create—whether it be a piece of tangible art or something as ephemeral as their own spiritual lives, everyone leaves inspired to do what they have not yet attempted.

And that's what makes a truly great organization, I've found. The people who are a part of it and the dreams that they find they can fulfill. I attribute this attitude of excitement to the many women on both coasts who make up the current Steering Committees and our Advisory Board. They are all women of power, foresight and honor. With individuals like this around me, I find it impossible to believe that I ever scoffed at the importance of women's rights and women's issues.

Here's to organizations, women and men, and the future of animation. May all support organizations like this one help it grow into the next century and beyond. And here's to not being afraid of "joining"—sometimes it's just a part of a little thing called

"growing."

For information about Women In Animation, send email to rpstreet@aol.com or wanki@aol.com, or write to P.O. Box 17706, Encino, CA 91416, or call (818) 759-9596.



Painting by Mary Blair, for Disney's *Alice in Wonderland*, which was displayed at a Name That Toon gallery fundraiser for WIA.
© The Walt Disney Company

Rita Street, the founder of Women in Animation and former editor and publisher of *Animation Magazine*, is now a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.

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Women in the Animation Industry—Some Thoughts

by Linda Simensky



Linda Simensky, The Cartoon Network's
Director of Programming

In the animation industry, a professional association called Women In Animation formed in 1993. Men in the business joked, "Where's the Men In Animation group?," to which the women replied, "That's what we call 'The Animation Industry.'"

Actually, there are a lot of women in animation, and their number has been rising. I don't know that there are statistics that are readily available, but since this is an opinion piece, my opinion is that there are more women than ever working in animation.

What is unusual and noteworthy, though, is that there is not an even breakdown of tasks between men and women. This is obvious to the naked eye of anyone visiting an animation studio or network animation department. Just as an entomologist can view the breakdown of gender roles in an ant colony, we can analyze the animation industry the same way. The following are some thoughts—not on the analysis itself—but on why we can analyze the industry that way.

First, imagine you were attending a large party for members of

the animation industry. After a round of toasts to, say, Bob Clampett or Shamus Culhane, everyone went off to the lavatories at the same time. The line into the women's room would be comprised of a large number of network executives, studio management types ranging from producers to production assistants, color and background designers, and perhaps an occasional director. The line into the men's room would include studio owners, business types, directors, artists, show creators, designers, and a significant number of other animation artists.

While this is more of an observation, it has already been established that men and women gravitate to different parts of the industry. There are a couple of theories that are often discussed to support this.

Different Paths

First, there is the history of the industry. While there have always been women in the animation, historically the more important jobs have gone to men. This is as much a function of the eras involved and of the history of the business. When you consider that the entire animation industry has been around for less than a century, and that for years women were systematically relegated to such "lesser" jobs such as ink and paint, women have actually done fairly well even getting into any positions in the industry over the last 20 years.

It is also important to look at the motivations of people entering animation. The artisans of the industry (more men than women) tend to enter by first studying animation in school and then simply getting jobs in their chosen field. Some women have taken that path as well, such as director Becky Bristow, currently head of the California Institute of the Arts Character Animation program, and Nancy Beiman, a supervising animator at Disney. But many women, more often than not, tend to "end up" in the industry by one of three different paths, all not all of which involve animation or even an initial interest in the field.

The "different path" theory includes the following typical job motivations. Some women are driven by an interest in children's television, of which animation comprises a large bulk. These people could just as easily end up in publishing or teaching, where many began their careers. Geraldine Laybourne, formerly president of Nickelodeon/Nick at Nite, and now President of Disney/ABC Cable Networks, initially pursued a career in education and entered the media industry with an active interest in children's television.

Others simply aspire to work in the entertainment industry, and have career paths that take them through the animation industry as well as through live-action television and film production. There are also other career paths that can lead to animation,

Just as an entomologist can view the breakdown of gender roles in an ant colony, we can analyze the animation industry the same way.

including the CD-ROM or CGI industries, as well as graphic design and illustration. Oddly enough several translators of Japanese language materials have gone on to careers as animation producers.

There are also those who aspire to work in animation but cannot animate. I offer myself as an example of this. People taking this path, which ultimately leads them to animation, often take the same paths noted above, but direct themselves toward animation and are not as interested in the other areas.

We need to understand why girls lose interest in watching cartoons.

What's So Funny About Cheese?

Whether or not there is a historical precedent for women in the animation industry, there theoretically are no reasons for women not to be in it now. Perhaps the question to ask is, "Why aren't women as interested in animation as men are?" Maureen Furniss explored this in her article, "What's So Funny About Cheese? And Other Dilemmas: The Nickelodeon Television Network and Its (Female) Animation Producers," which can be found in the Spring 1994 issue of *Animation Journal*. She took a look at the animated shows on Nickelodeon, particularly *Doug* and *The Ren & Stimpy Show*, which were created and developed by men, and how the shows' staffs dealt with Nickelodeon's management, which was primarily women. Furniss discussed the difference in men and women's taste in what was funny, and how that shaped the animation they were doing. The article also chronicles the problems and arguments women encountered when opposing humor they saw as gross, inap-

propriate or obscure.

I think, though, to understand this difference in taste, we need to understand why girls lose their interest in watching cartoons; this seems to occur when many reach their early teens, as they become more interested in their personal lives, in music and films, as well as showing that they are "older." It's a time when cartoons are associated with their younger selves. I think girls are also driven away by their difference in taste, which involves less interest in watching slapstick, violence and the male-oriented topics of most animated fare.

There is a slightly old and out of date theory that girls will watch shows about boys, but boys will not watch shows where the main characters are girls. I disagree, as it seems clear that everyone will watch a clever, well-made show. Nevertheless, this theory, along with the feeling that girls no longer watch cartoons after a certain age, and the need to sell toys, has led to many of the animated programs being made specifically for boys. And then the lack of interest in cartoons by women ultimately led to the lack of women in the industry.

Many women who want to enter the animation industry tend either to avoid the more violent sorts of programs, or are in network management where they attempt to mollify the shows. Many, particularly those who wish to create shows, have directed themselves more toward preschool programming or more traditional Disney or Disney-influenced animation.

More Room For Self Expression

Another aspect of this is that women pursuing careers in the field seem more interested than men in animation as an art form. Thus, it is not surprising that the area of independent filmmaking

seems to have more women than men; after all, it is an area of animation which has more room for self-expression and no real traditional hierarchy in which to fit.

It seems that as animation becomes more and more popular, a larger number of potential workers and executives will migrate to animation from other fields. This leaves us pondering how the animation industry will change in the future, particularly with regard to women in the industry. Will more women enter the industry, and will they shift over to the more male-dominated jobs? Will the financial success of animated films and television shows cause more workers to shift from live action to animation? Will more men supplant women in key positions in children's television, at the networks and at animation studios, as in the past?

Many women tend to "end up" in the industry by different paths, not all of which involve animation.

It seems clear that as more programs are made that girls like as well as boys, such as *The Simpsons*, *Doug* and *Rugrats*, there will be more girls who will consider animation as a viable career option. However, if the industry continues to concentrate on animation that will sell toys to boys, the attraction may be less.

In the meantime, here is what I would like to see: Female show creators, more female directors, and a funny cartoon with a female lead character. After that, everything would be different.

Linda Simensky is Cartoon Network's Director of Programming.

Mary Ellen Bute: Seeing Sound

by William Moritz



Mary Ellen Bute

The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive

As with many pioneer animators, Mary Ellen Bute is hardly known today, primarily because her films are not easily available in good prints. This was not always true. During a 25-year period, from 1934 until about 1959, the 11 abstract films she made played in regular movie theaters around the country, usually as the short with a first-run prestige feature, such as *Mary of Scotland*, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, or *Hans Christian Andersen*—which means that millions saw her work, many more than most other experimental animators.

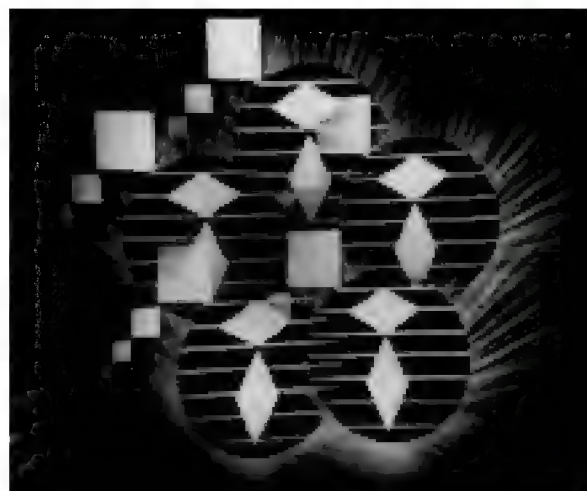
The diminutive Mary Ellen grew up in Texas, and retained a soft southern accent and genteel demeanor throughout her life. She studied painting in Texas and Philadelphia, but felt frustrated by the inability to wield light in a flowing time-

continuum. She studied stage lighting at Yale in an attempt to gain the technical expertise to create a "color organ" which would allow her to paint with living light—and also haunted the studios of electronic genius Leo Theremin and Thomas Wilfred whose *Clavilux* instrument projected sensuous streams of soft swirling colors.

She was drawn into filmmaking by a collaboration with the musician Joseph Schillinger, who had developed an elaborate theory about musical structure, which reduced all music to a series of mathematical formulae. Schillinger wanted to make a film to prove that his synchronization system worked in illustrating music with visual images, and Mary Ellen undertook the project of animating the visuals. The film was never completed, and a still published with an article by Schillinger in the magazine *Experimental Cinema* No. 5 (1934) makes it clear why: the intricate image, reminiscent of Kandinsky's complex paintings, would have taken a single animator years to

redraw thousands of times.

Mary Ellen continued to use the Schillinger system in her subsequent films, often to their detriment, for Schillinger's insistence on the mathematics of musical quantities fails to deal with musical qualities, much as John Whitney's later *Digital Harmony* theories. Many pieces of music may share exactly the same mathematics quantities, but the qualities that make one of them a memorable classic and another rather ordinary or forgettable involves other non-mathematical factors, such as orchestral tone color, nuance of mood and interpretation. In Mary Ellen's weakest works, like the 1951 *Color Rhapsodie*, she is betrayed precisely by this problem, using gaudily-colored, percussive images of fireworks explosions during a soft, sensuous passage—perfectly timed



Polka Graph (1952) Mary Ellen Bute
Courtesy of William Moritz

mathematically, but unsuited to mood and tone color.

Egg Beaters, Bracelets and Sparklers

Mary Ellen made her own first film, *Rhythm in Light*, together with Melville Webber, who had collaborated with James Watson on two classic live-action experimental films, *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928) and *Lot in Sodom* (1933). Webber contributed his experience on those films with making models of paper and cardboard and filming them through such things as mirrors and a cut-glass ashtray to get multiple parallel reflections of the shape. The cameraman, Ted Nemeth, who worked commercially on advertising and documentary films, would soon marry Mary Ellen, and worked on all her subsequent films. *Rhythm in Light*, with black-and-white images tightly synchronized to "Anitra's Dance" from Grieg's music for *Peer Gynt*, uses not only Webber's models, but also cellophane, ping-pong balls, egg beaters, bracelets and sparklers to create abstract light forms and shadows. Many of these images are "out of focus" or filmed reflected on a wall for soft nuance and distortion that conceals the origin of the abstract apparition.

Mary Ellen made two more similar black-and-white films, *Synchromy No. 2* (1936) and *Parabola* (1938), which also are not exactly animation, nor completely abstract in the sense of Oskar Fischinger's films. Syn-

chromy No. 2, synchronized to the "Evening Star" aria from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, uses a statue of Venus to represent the star. The effect of constant flowing forms, however, is quite striking, especially in *Parabola*, which is a bit long at nine minutes, and could well drop the jazzy finale since the lovely mid-



Color Rhapsody (1951) Mary Ellen Bute
Courtesy of William Moritz

dle slow section provides a satisfying closure.

In 1931, Universal had run one of Oskar Fischinger's *Studies* as a novelty item in their newsreel. Mary Ellen had seen it, and proposed to Universal that they use one of her films in a similar fashion. Since they could use only two or three minutes, Mary Ellen made a special piece, *Dada*, which Universal distributed in 1936.

Working in Color

Beginning with the 1939 *Escape*, Mary Ellen began to work in color, and used more conventional animation for the main themes in the music, but still combining it with "special effect" backgrounds—sometimes swirling liquids, clouds or fireworks, other times light

effects created with conventional stage lighting, such as imploding or exploding circles made by rising in or out a spotlight.

For the 1940 *Spook Sport*, Mary Ellen hired Norman McLaren (living in New York before he went to Canada) to draw directly on film strips the "characters" of ghosts, bats, etc., to synchronize with Saint-Saëns' *Danse Macabre*. Mary Ellen kept McLaren's painted originals, and reused some of the images in later films, including *Tarantella* (1941), *Color Rhapsodie* (1951) and *Polka Graph* (1952), where they seem less at home stylistically than in their original context.

Tarantella seems Mary Ellen's best film. Using an eccentric modern composition by Edwin Gershefski, Mary Ellen herself animated most of the imagery, using jagged lines to choreograph dissonant scales. Even the sensuous McLaren interlude is not totally out of character. Another of her finest films, *Pastorale* (1953), reverts to the technique of the early black-and-white films, creating continuous flows of colored light, swirling in various directions to mime the multiple voices of J.S. Bach's

The diminutive Mary Ellen grew up in Texas, and retained a soft southern accent and genteel demeanor throughout her life.

Sheep May Safely Graze. The music's conductor/arranger, Leopold Stokowski, appears at the end superimposed over the abstract images—reminiscent of *Fantasia*!



Spook Sport (1940) Mary Ellen Bute
Courtesy of William Moritz

Combining Science and Art

In 1954, Mary Ellen began using oscilloscope patterns to create the main "figures" in her films. In her publicity, which is often repeated, she claimed to be the first person to combine "science and art" in this way, and she sold her last two films *Abstronic* (1954) and *Mood Contrasts* (1956) on their novelty. Actually, Norman McLaren used oscilloscope patterns in 1950 to generate abstract images for his *Around is Around*, which was screened at the Festival of Britain in 1951—and described in technical detail in *American Cinematographer*. Hy Hirsh also used oscilloscope imagery in his 1951 *Divertissement Rococo* in his 1953 *Eneri* and *Come Closer*. The sort of shapes that Mary Ellen captured from the cathode ray

tube for her films seems somewhat simpler or weaker than the forms McLaren and Hirsh use in their films. But she makes up for the "slinky" look of her main figures by imaginative

backgrounds and animation supplements. In the 1954 *Abstronic*, Mary Ellen uses her own paintings, with a kind of surrealist depth perspective, zooming in and out in rhythmic pulsations synched with the beat of "hoe down" music. In the exciting *Mood Contrasts* (1956, incorporat-

ing animation from a 1947 film *Mood Lyric*), she created her most complex collage of animation and special effects, including a striking sequence of colored lights refracting through glass bricks in oozing soft grid patterns.

Mary Ellen made two more commercial shorts, a 1958 *Imagination* number for the Steve Allen television show, and a 1959 commercial for RCA, *New Sensations in Sound*, both of which are clever, sharply edited collages of effects from her previous films. In 1956 she made a live-action short *The Boy Who Saw Through* and spent the next decade working on a live-action feature based on James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. In the 1970s, feminists "rediscovered" Mary Ellen as a pioneer woman filmmaker, but by that time many of her abstract films were no

longer available in good prints, and the original nitrates were dispersed to archives in Wisconsin, Connecticut and New York. She was still, however, celebrated justly for a major achievement in making her films and distributing them herself, against all odds, successfully. Mary Ellen is also quite important as a formative influence on Norman McLaren. The kind of titles Mary Ellen used to preface her films, explaining them to an average audience as a new kind of art linking sight and sound prefigure McLaren's similar audience—friendly prefaces to his National Film Board experiments. Mary Ellen also proudly announced that she had used combs and collanders and whatever else to make the imagery in her films, encouraging a delight in simplicity and novelty of experimentation. Surely this left its mark on McLaren, too.

Mary Ellen Bute Abstract Filmography

Synchronization (1934)

Collaboration with Joseph Schillinger and Lewis Jacobs [paper or cel animation; lost? incomplete?]

Rhythm in Light (1935, b&w, 5 min.)

In collaboration with Melville Webber. Music: "Anitra's Dance" from Grieg's music for Peer Gynt. Moving models with lighting: "cellophane & ping-



Abstronic (1954) Mary Ellen Bute
The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive

pong balls," sparklers, egg beaters, bracelets & barber poles, and some drawn animation.

Synchromy No. 2

(1936, b&w, 5 min.)

Music: "Evening Star" from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, sung by Reinald Werrenrath. Light reflections from cut glass, colander, etc. "Gothic arches, a flowering rod, and stairs recognizable."

Dada

(1936)

3-minute short for Universal Newsreel.

Parabola

(1938, b&w, 9 min.)

Music: *Création du monde* by Darius Milhaud. Based on a sculpture by Rutherford Boyd. Small models and bent rods on a turntable.

Escape

(1939, color, 5 min.)

Music: Toccata in D Minor by J.S. Bach. Comb, cut celluloid, mir-

rors & lighting. [cel animation]

Spook Sport

(1940, color, 8 min.)

Music: *Danse macabre* by Saint-Saëns. Cel animation plus McLaren's drawn-on-film effects.

Tarantella

(1941, color, 5 min.)

Music by Edwin Gershefski. Drawn animation and cut-outs with light effects, McLaren.

Color Rhapsodie

(1951, color, 6 min.)

Music: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 by Liszt. "Paint on glass, fireworks," animation, fireworks and clouds optically colored.

Polka Graph

(1952, color, 5 min.)

Music: "Polka" from *The Age of Gold* by Shostakovich. Cel animation over graph pattern, using Schillinger system. cutouts and cellophane layered.

Pastorale

(1953, color, 8 min.)

Music: *Sheep May Safely Graze* by J.S. Bach. "Kaleidoscope of ever-changing shapes, colors, forms, vapors, illuminations and mobile perspectives."

Abstronic

(1954, color, 7 min.)

Music: "Hoe Down" from *Billy the Kid* by Aaron Copeland and

"Ranch House Party" by Don Gillis. Oscilloscope patterns over drawn backgrounds.

Mood Contrasts

(1956, color, 7 min.)

Music: "Hymn to the Sun" from *The Golden Cockerel* and "Dance of the Tumblers" from *The Snow Maiden* by Rimsky-Korsakov. Oscilloscope over backgrounds, including colored liquids, clouds, and grids of colored light shot through glass bricks or cut-glass plate.

Imagination

(1958, color, 3 min.)

Collage of effects from earlier films. [Abstract bit for Steve Allen]

RCA: New Sensations in Sound

(1959, color, 3 min)

Commercial. Collage of effects from previous films.

William Mortiz teaches Animation History at Cal Arts, and has widely published articles on Animators. He has also made dozens of films, and received an American Film Institute Grant to complete a half-hour animation film *All My Lost Lovers*.

Claire Parker, An Appreciation

by Giannalberto Bendazzi

Alexandre ("Alosha") Alexeïeff and Claire Parker (A Night on Bald Mountain [1933], The Nose [1963], Pictures at an Exhibition [1972], etc.), loved to introduce themselves as "the artist and the animator," i.e., he was the one who created the images and she choreographed them.



The Nose (1963) by Alexandre Alexeïeff and Claire Parker
Courtesy of Cecile Starr

I knew them both for the last 11 years of their life together; and although I became very close friends, I still feel it is almost impossible to know which of them did what.

Their working relationship was very much like their personal relationship: happy, loving, creative and, above all else, inextricably linked. I witnessed Alosha (a nickname based on his family name, not his first name) proposing certain movements to Claire, which she faithfully executed; and I saw her discussing (and, on that occasion, rejecting) the development of a scene he had conceived.

Discreet Yes, Shy No

In fact, she always maintained that, "Between us, he's the genius." I know that she did not say this out of either love or because she was shy. Although she loved Alosha very much, she was also very frank; and she certainly wasn't shy. (Discreet, yes; shy, no.) But Alosha's genius could not have been expressed without Claire. For it was she who allowed his creativity to flourish. Initially, in a very practical way with money, and later giving him energy, confidence and inspiration.

Claire Parker was born in Boston, Massachusetts, nearly

90 years ago, on August 31, and died in Paris on October 3, 1981. Her family was rich, prominent and cultivated, and did not discriminate against her because she was a woman.

Claire had the freedom to travel anywhere, read what she wanted and associate

with who she liked. (As a teenager, her father decided to introduce her to the perils of whiskey and got drunk.) In her twenties, like many other American artists, writers and intellectuals of her generation, she left for Paris.

In Paris, she had the urge to create, but didn't know exactly what to do. Her current beau, a Mexican lawyer also living in Paris, gave her some books illustrated by a Monsieur Alexeïeff. She was immediately struck by these illustrations and promptly wrote to the publisher asking to meet the artist, so she could study with him. "I figured I

would meet an old, dignified man with a white beard," Claire recalled with a giggle, "but [instead] I saw this tall, brown, handsome, aristocratic 30 year old guy. Our first lesson ended on the banks of the Seine, hand in hand; and there was never a second one."

Gravures Animées

Claire was wealthy, while Alosha, a Russian émigré, was not; so, she decided to invest

registered under her name, and that the film, like all the later ones, was signed by both.

Claire always maintained that the films she was most responsible for were the advertising shorts they made between 1935 and 1940 using various techniques, but not the pinscreen. She directed these films, while Alosha created the images and their collaborator Etienne Raik animated them. (It is less clear what

too decorative and it was Claire who best exploited the language of chromatism.

Claire, who spoke perfect French (though with an American accent), mastered Russian well enough to read Dostoevski aloud for the delight of her husband when he was sick. She knew the Russian classics almost by heart. Thus, it is not surprising that she was able to relate so closely to Alosha so closely when making films such as *The Nose* (from Gogol), *Paintings at an Exhibition* and *Three Themes* (both from Mussorgsky).

Claire Parker was a cultivated, intelligent and scholarly; but she was always, incredibly, charmingly sensitive and even candid. When I asked her to name her favorite films of all time, she immediately said, "The ones with Tom Mix and his beautiful white horse!"

Although she loved Alosha very much, she was also very frank; and she certainly wasn't shy.

her money into the building of the pinscreen he conceived for creating gravures animées (animated engravings), and into the first film made with it: *A Night on Bald Mountain*, based on Mussorgsky's tone poem. It should be noted that the patent for the pinscreen was

the contribution of Alexandra de Grinevsky, Alexeïeff's former wife and the fourth member of the production team, actually was.)

Many of these films still exist and what is most striking about them is the way they express the joys of color; this

may seem strange from a pair of filmmakers who preferred to work in black and white. Alosha didn't like color in films, although he pioneered it in the engravings he did for books. He said he found it



The Nose (1963)
by Alexandre Alexeïeff and Claire Parker
Courtesy of Cecile Starr

Giannalberto Bendazzi is a Milan-based film historian and critic whose own history of animation, *Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation*, was published in the US by Indiana University Press and in the UK by John Libbey. His other books on animation include *Topoline e poi* (1978), *Due volte l'oceana* (1983) and *Il movimento creato* (1993, with Guido Michelson).



FILM REVIEW

Peaches N' Dreams: Henry Selick's **James And The Giant Peach**

by Wendy Jackson

"It was a tiny seed of an idea. I walked around it, looked at it, and sniffed it for a long time."

— Roald Dahl

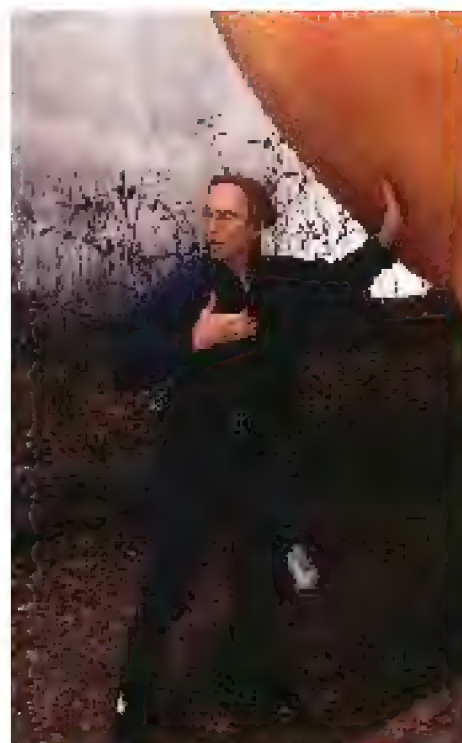
Before being adapted to the screen, Roald Dahl's children's book, *James and the Giant Peach* captured the imagination of several generations of readers since it was first published in 1961.

James is the story of an orphaned boy and his dream of going to New York City, "the place where dreams come true," his parents told him, before they were eaten by a wild rhinoceros. With the help of some magic crocodile tongues, the lonely little boy's dream turns into a fantastic adventure when he crawls inside a giant peach inhabited by a family of anthropomorphised insects. Obviously, this is not your typical Hollywood story, even for an animated film.

Dahl's writing is, by its nature, essentially macabre and outrageous—which is also what makes it so delicious; in this, it is much like the early (pre-*Nightmare Before*

Christmas) films of director Henry Selick, who has now brought Dahl's film to the screen.

Roald Dahl turned down several movie offers for the book over the years, because he felt that it would be nearly impossible to translate the story into film. But when the late author's widow, Felicity, was approached by Selick, she was so impressed with his accomplishments in animation that she offered him the opportunity to adapt the story for the screen.



Director Henry Selick and the Giant Peach.
© Walt Disney Pictures

It lacks the saccharin sweetness and gushy romantic subplots one comes to expect in Disney films.

From his training at CalArts and beginnings at Disney, to his years producing award-winning commercials and MTV station IDs, Selick has developed an unparalleled imaginative style, making him one of the most innovative directors working in the animation industry today.

As a fan of both artists' work, I was pleased with Selick's adaptation, which lacks the saccharin sweetness, unrealistic smarminess or gushy romantic subplots one comes to expect (and dread) in Disney films. Karey Kirkpatrick, who co-authored the screenplay, noted that, "One of the big challenges in writing the script was to stay true to the book while giving it the stronger emotional drive that it needed to work as a film." There are, of course, the usual moral fibers woven into the story, mostly in the heartwarming but unnecessary musical score; but even the songs are tastefully and appropri-

ately incorporated into the overall plot.

The team that brought Dahl's story to life on the screen have produced a virtually seamless blend of stop-motion animation, computer-generated imagery (CGI) and live-action. Selick put together quite a crew, including several talented artists from the *Nightmare Before Christmas* production team, such as Animation Supervisor Paul Berry, as well as contributors with experience in other areas, such as Visual Effects Supervisor Nancy St. John (Babe). Peach's visual sophistication and level of technical finesse far surpasses that of *Nightmare*, proof that Selick has molded a production company that has finally found its voice.

In developing the film's striking visual style, Selick turned to illustrator Lane Smith, creator of such acclaimed children's books as *Math Curse*, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, and the wonderfully wacky *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. Selick, who had long wanted to work with Smith, describes his style as "glowing

paintings that are just wonderful and filled with lots of mystery and style. His work looks like a cousin of my own, only a little sweeter."

Smith, a long-time fan of Dahl's writing, recalls that, "Contractually, I was only supposed to do 20 inspirational paintings and designs, but I ended up doing 50. It was also supposed to be just a 6-month job, but I stayed on for a couple of years just because it was really fun." Smith's first experience working on a big screen film seems to have been a positive one for him, as he is finally considering developing *The Stinky Cheese Man* as an animated film.

The inspirational paintings Smith created for the film have been published in a Disney "storybook version" of the book, and it's worthwhile buying it just to see Smith's fantastic artistry. Dahl's family was so pleased with Smith's inspirational artwork that they commissioned a set of illustrations for a new edition of the original novel, wholly different than those used for the film.

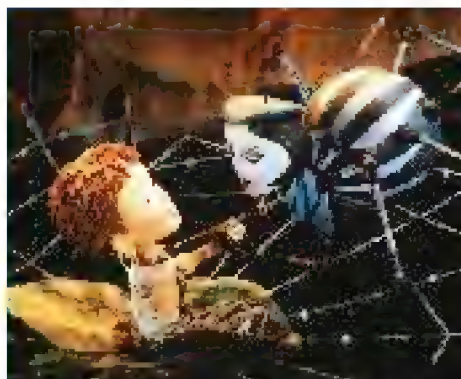
Lately, there has been a growing trend of feature films combining animation and live-action. The challenge they all face is how to bring about a unity of design. Harley Jessup, Peach's production designer, notes that, "A big issue in terms of production design was how to blend and relate the live-action beginning and end with

the animated world. We wanted the live-action world to be much more monochromatic and the animated sequences to be rich in saturated color and much more expansive in feel." Jessup did a notable job of marrying the two worlds by adding a sense of the surreal to the live-action using forced-perspective sets, and a sense of the hyperreal to the animated sequences through the use of computer-generated effects.

"We made a decision early on," Selick recalls, "that we would start our film in a very stylized and



The shark attack scene in *James and The Giant Peach*
© Walt Disney Pictures



James and the spider.
© Walt Disney Pictures

muted live-action world that would look almost like a stage play or an opera set. That way, when we entered the world of animation, it would be more magical. By saving animation for when James enters the peach, it adds to the strength of the fantasy."

One of the film's most impressive scenes is when James faces his ultimate fear—a terrifically terrifying and huge rhinoceros—emerging from the clouds towards him. In the book, the rhinoceros situation is inherently nonsensical

to begin with, and the seriousness with which they represented it in the film embraced its delightful ridiculousness. This scene was actually produced in a relatively old-fashioned manner, with an underwater puppet, cloud tanks and cel animated lightning effects.

The shark scene, however, seems rather gratuitous. What happened to the school of real sharks described in the book? Although technically impressive, the gigantic computer-generated mechanical monster (i.e., shark) seems to be more of a drastically out of place World War II metaphor than an integral part of the story. It is a pretty long scene, and after awhile I found myself seeing the shark as a visual metaphor for the overbearing technology which is replacing traditional, organic techniques of animation.

Peaches N' Dreams

On the other hand, the sequence following the scene where James is tucked into a web bed by Miss Spider after a rowdy round of peach-eating and singing is something else. You know what they say about how eating before bed affects your dreams? Well, don't blink, because what follows should make all animation fans start eating peaches at bedtime. The dream sequence is a daringly experimental 30 second mini-masterpiece that employs two-dimensional cutout anima-

tion, much in the manner of Selick's *Slow Bob In The Lower Dimensions* (1990) done for MTV.

Another instance of Selick's unique visual style is reserved for the die-hard credit-watchers. At

film will be yet another marriage of live-action, stop-motion and CGI.

Production on *Toots* will start next summer, and in the interim, Twitching Image animators are



The delightful insects in *James and The Giant Peach*
© Walt Disney Pictures

credit's end, there's a brief but clever sequence in the style of his freakish MTV Top of the Hour spots. It features "Spike the Aunts," an 18th century-style mechanical toy which plays revenge on James' wicked aunts. A thoroughly delightful sequence, obviously created just for the fun of it, but representative of the charm and brio that characterizes the whole film.

What's next for Selick and his team of talents? As part of a three-picture deal with Miramax, Selick's San Francisco based production company, Twitching Image will create a movie version of another unusual children's book, *Toots* and the *Upside-Down House* by Carol Hughes. In development now, the

being provided with finishing funds to complete a handful of animated shorts. Finally, a studio that realizes the value of fostering the talent and imagination of its' individual contributors. Henry Selick understands this concept well; after all, his own creative inspirations are rooted in the films he produced independently.

Wendy Jackson is a Sales Representative for Animation World Network. Previously employed as General Manager of the International Animated Film Society's Los Angeles chapter (ASIFA-Hollywood), she coordinated events such as the 1995 Annie Awards and the 1996 Animation Opportunities Expo.



FILM REVIEW

All Dogs Go To Heaven 2

by Frankie Kowalski

Unlike most sequels, All Dogs Go to Heaven 2, directed by Paul Sabel-la and Larry Lerker, is clearly better than the 1989 Don Bluth original. This tale of how Charlie Barkin (voiced by Charlie Sheen) gets to go back to earth to retrieve Gabriel's horn, has considerably more substance, is certainly more comprehensible and the art direction of Deane Taylor really captures the essence of San Francisco. Yet, despite its virtues, it suffers from a problem endemic to many studios trying to cope with a worldwide shortage of animation artists while working with small budgets and having big "Disney dreams."

All Dogs Go to Heaven 2 begins with our scoundrel Charlie totally bored with heaven's nothingness and yearning for earthly adventure. Fallen Angel Carface (Ernest Borgnine) steals Gabriel's Horn (without it the gates of heaven can't open) and becomes a sidekick to Satan's helper, Red-a cat (George Hearn). So Charlie and Itchy (Dom DeLuise) go back to earth to rescue the horn as well

as befriending an 8-year old runaway boy, David (Adam Wylie). Charlie is also charmed by a sassy Irish setter Sasha La Fleur (Sheena Easton) who follows along as if she were his

Many studios are trying to cope with a worldwide shortage of animation artists while working with small budgets and having big "Disney Dreams".

alter-ego. Charlie rediscovers, through this mischance adventure, his compassionate soul

and in the end he prevails over evil.

Writer-producers Mark Young and Kelly Ward should be commended for giving the story considerably more validity the second time around for the original characters Charlie Barkin, Itchy, Carface and Annabelle (Bebe Neuwirth). The film's songs by Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil revealed more about the characters as well. My favorite song was "Count Me Out" performed by saavy Sasha (Sheena Easton), as she



Andy sings in the streets of San Francisco with his new pals, Charlie Barkin, Itchy, and Sasha in All Dogs Go To Heaven 2.

© MGM/UA

makes her entrance in a canine dive.

The original film seemed to have suffered both from Bluth's inability to tell a story and a rampant perfectionism that often ends up making his films more confusing than not. For instance, if you saw *All Dogs Go To Heaven*, I think you have a good idea of what I'm talking about. Scenes seemed to have been added and/or taken out without any explanation. For example, the girl wins lots of money gambling with Charlie and Itchy and buys all new sets of clothes; then, in the very next scene she still has her rags on... I just don't get it???

All Dogs Go To Heaven 2 does display inconsistencies of a different sort. This time, as a result of what sometimes occurs when dealing with multiple studios around the world. At least that's the only way I can explain why characters went from opaque to transparent and back again within the scene; or why the colors would be bright and vivid in one shot, only to become overcast in the next! I'm sorry to say that I walked out of the theater almost thinking I needed new glasses—and I am already very nearsighted. I guess the only saving grace during this task was that they used my favorite color purple throughout the movie.

Perhaps a good part of the problem stems from the fact that their main studio, Screen Animation Ireland (Don Bluth's

old studio in Dublin), went out of business and could not finish the film. As a result, MGM had to do much more subcontracting than anticipated. The worse part was that this happened towards the end of production, when about 90% of the film had already been animated. Trying to finish a film under these circumstances, given the tight labor market and the worldwide boom in animation, was probably something of a nightmare.

It is for these reasons, among others, that the Hollywood majors have invested so heavily in building their own in-house studios, where they can control every aspect of the production process—despite the extra costs involved. MGM, which started its modest animation division only a few years, is still recovering from its receivership by Credit Lyonnais.

Despite all of its dilemmas, it's nice that MGM Animation has entered the feature film emporium and won't be discouraged from further attempts at theatrical films.

Frankie Kowalski is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine and is a regular contributor to ASIFA-Hollywood's newsletter *The Inbetweeneer*.

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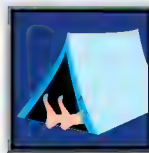
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FESTIVAL REVIEW

Cartoons On The Bay

by Giannalberto Bendazzi

Cartoons on the Bay—The International Festival of Animation: Films, TV Series and Fairy Tales is the English name of an Italian international festival held April 15-18 in Amalfi, Italy. The city itself is a tiny, beautiful and colorful town on the Mediterranean coast 60 km south of Naples. It was the festival's first edition and its artistic director, Alfio Bastiancich (a young veteran of animation festivals and animation scholarship), has pointed out the novelty of its focus. "There is no other festival like this," he told The Hollywood Reporter, "since the other festivals, like Annecy, Ottawa and Hiroshima, focus their attention on auteur films, and not so much on individual TV production."

Which actually is the point, since high quality animated entertainment for television is the great novelty of today's global market, as opposed to the situation of just 5-6 years ago, when basically only two forms of animation existed (besides commercials): auteur films and TV series.

Giampaolo Sodano, SACIS' Chairman, added: "With animation occupying 20% of the audiovisual market and becoming a growing trend, as of yet there had never been a festival that analyzed and rewarded the very best in TV cartoons." Sodano was the big muscle behind the festival; his company is the distribution branch of the government-owned Italian

broadcaster RAI, and his decision in favor of animation shows a strong determination to get involved with it—finally, after 30 years of absent-mindedness.

Pulcinella, Pulcinella ...

There were 56 films in competition representing 14 countries; 52 more were screened in the out of competition Show case section. The Golden Pulcinella for Best Character was awarded to Italy's Francesco Tullio Altan for Pimpa (a naive red spotted dog, created 20 years ago for a comic strip aimed at children; the 1995 pilot for a TV series is directed by Enzo D'Alò). The other Golden Pulcinella went to France's Fantôme Animation (Renato and Georges Lacroix) for their 1995 series Insektors, as Best Programme All Round. It is a 26 x 13' series using 3-D computer animation, that was honored "for its technical innovation in computer graphics, for the beauty of its images, for its rhythm and editing, for its sense of humor, for the quality of its soundtrack and for the originality of the characters."

**High quality animated
entertainment for television
is the great novelty of
today's global market.**

The Silver Pulcinella for the Best Programme for Infants went to France Animation (Jean-Luc Morel, Daniel Orgeval) for The Babalous,



a 65 x 5' Franco-Canadian series. The Silver Pulcinella for the Best Children's Programme (6-12 Years) went to Ralph Hibbert Entertainment (Graham Ralph, James Stevenson) for The Forgotten Toys. This was a 25 minute British TV special that was, to this writer's taste, actually the best film of the festival, masterfully crafted, tender, sensitive, very well written and very well designed.

The Silver Pulcinella for the Best Programme for Adolescents went to France Animation (Pascal Morelli) for Nighthood, a 26 x 26' series starring the classic feuilleton character Arsène Lupin. The Silver Pulcinella for the best program for adults went to Klasky Csupo (Eva Almos) for Duckman, the 13 x 24' American series. The Silver Pulcinella for Best Family Programme went to Bruno Bozzetto Productions (Bruno Bozzetto) for the Spaghetti Family pilot, a humorous description of everyday life in a typical Italian family of today.

Special awards were given for graphics, to Japan's Four Seasons of Pepperon (a TV special produced by NHK Educational corporation and directed by Mitsumosa

Anno); for animation to the UK's The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies and Mrs. Tittle Mouse (a special produced by TV Cartoons Ltd. and directed by Dave Unwin from a tale by Beatrix Potter); for background scenery to Belarus' Home Sweet Home (a pilot produced by Validia and directed by Vitaly Baku-novic and Susan Sivachov).

The Fairy Tales section showed previews of the forthcoming Disney extravaganza, The Hunchback of Notre Dame (exciting, as usual), an upcoming Italian feature, The Blue Arrow, directed by Enzo D'Alò and designed by Palolo Cardoni (a very promising film for children, with nice drawings and a very good music score by Paolo Conte), and a cinematic version of Prokofieff's Peter and the Wolf, directed and produced by George Daugherty, with characters designed and created by Chuck Jones (a little disappointing).

Children and Violence
During the festival, a UNESCO sponsored conference about children and violence was held. At the end, some guidelines were issued, aimed not at limiting creativity, but "to be a challenge to find new ways of telling stories, catch adventures and portray a

character." Among these guidelines: plot conflicts should find a positive solution in each episode of a series; conflicts and violence should be expressed in a hum-



Insektors
© Fantome

orous and playful way; animated cartoons for small children should avoid, as much as possible, any violence—physical or psychological, explicit or implicit; violence, if present, should be justified by the plot; violence shouldn't be presented as a viable solution for a problem. It is true that virtually each and every educator in Europe is currently complaining about violence on television, and that it is going to be rejected in almost all children's programs. This could be a problem in global markets, as there are actual differences among audiences. Stanford Blum, President and CEO of the US-based Imagination Factory, explains that, "In Europe, they don't want violence. In Japan, it's key. You either have to do one type of show or the other."

Last but not least, Amalfi brought out some good news about Italian animation. As I noted above, SACIS and RAI are getting more and more involved with animation production and distribution. Giuseppe Laganà is already at work on a series based upon the popular Italian comic book star, Lupo Alberto (Albert the Wolf); pilots have been commissioned from Laganà (Arturo and Malik), Bruno

Bozetto (The Spaghetti Family), Maurizio Forestieri (The House of Decius), Enzo D'Alò and Paolo Zaniboni (Steam Rail), Pier Luigi De Mas (Goose Pimples), Guido Manuli (Gno Gno and Go Duck); Manuli is also working on a project for a comedy-horror feature film. It is a great start for a broadcaster that had scorned Italian animation for 30 years—and for an industry that has suffered for too long from a lack of a home market.



Cartoons On The Bay

per Giannalberto Bendazzi



Cartoons on the Bay è il titolo inglese di un festival italianissimo, ma tutto orientato a un grande mercato planetario: quello del disegno animato televisivo di qualità, novità strutturale destinata a scrivere (come del resto già sta facendo) un capitolo totalmente nuovo della storia del cinema d'animazione. Al festival diretto da Alfio Bastiancich, che si è svolto nell'ammirevole cornice della baia di Amalfi e che era alla sua prima edizione, partecipavano 56 opere in concorso, selezionate tra fiabe, special ed episodi di serie, in rappresentanza di 14 nazioni.

Vincitori con il Pulcinella d'oro sono risultata l'italiano Francesco Tullio Altan per il miglior personaggio (Nuove avventure della Pimpa, 1995, serie diretta da Enzo D'Alò) e i francesi Renato e Georges Lacroix per la serie in computer animation *Insektors* (1995). Fra i diversi Pulcinella d'argento spiccano il nostro Bruno Bozzetto con il "pilota" della serie *La famiglia Spaghetti* (una saga ironico-realistica sulle disavventure quotidiane di una famiglia media italiana), il britannico Graham Ralph con il sottile e delicato special *The Forgotten Toys* (un orsac-chiotto

e una bambola gettati via cercano una nuova vita e nuovi padroncini), l'americana Eva Almos con la serie *Duckman*, di grande inventiva sia nelle immagini sia nei testi, destinata eminentemente agli adulti.

La sezione "fiabe" ha offerto l'anticipazione del nuovo musical della Disney, *Il gobbo di Notre Dame* e il non meno promettente assaggio del lungometraggio italiano *La freccia azzurra*, tratto da un racconto di Gianni Rodari e diretto da Enzo D'Alò su disegni (ottimi) di Paolo Cardoni e musiche di Paolo Conte (produzione Laterna Magica di Torino).

Si diceva della novità rappresentata dal disegno animato televisivo di qualità. La globalizzazione dei mercati ha fatto sì che negli ultimi quattro-cinque anni il prodotto cinetelevisivo sia stato realizzato non più per un pubblico limitato, "nazionale", ma piuttosto pensando a spettatori statunitensi, europei, asiatici, latinoamericani contemporaneamente. A sorpresa, questo allargarsi dell'audience non ha portato a un abbassamento del denominatore comune qualitativo, ma esattamente al contrario: a una riqualificazione continua del lavoro, tanto da creare una sempre più dirompente "terza via" fra l'animazione d'autore e quella commerciale. L'esempio più significativo ne è probabilmente il progetto "What a Cartoon" della Hanna-Barbera, che ha portato alla realizzazione di brevi opere uniche degne dei grandi classici americani dei Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, Friz Fre-

leng. *Cartoons on the Bay* ha capito il fenomeno ed è stato la prima manifestazione al mondo a testimoniare. L'altra grande notizia proveniente da Amalfi riguarda il nostro Paese. Dopo decenni di trascuratezza, la RAI e la Sacis si stanno oggi impegnando massicciamente e direttamente nella produzione di film d'animazione italiani (di fatto, questo è stato un festival "della" Sacis e del suo presidente Giampaolo Sodano, ed è valso come testimonianza di una scelta di campo). Sono già completati o sono in corso di realizzazione progetti di Bozzetto, Manuli, Laganà, De Mas; molti altri sono in fase di elaborazione, con un occhio di riguardo per gli autori-prouttori giovani. Per il momento i dirigenti di viale Mazzini parlano esclusivamente di opere per ragazzi, e battono anzi molto su questo tasto (sul quale la concorrenza Fininvest è piuttosto sguarnita). A precisa domanda, hanno manifestato l'intenzione di indirizzarsi in un secondo tempo volontà, e zittendo il pessimismo della ragione, questo potrebbe essere l'inizio di una nuova era per la storia della nostra produzione.





DESERT ISLAND SERIES

Women always have plenty to pack!!

compiled by Frankie Kowalski

Cecile Starr's top 9 picks if stranded on a desert island...

"I've been lucky enough to know all the mentioned animators in person except one (Morse), and to count one of them (Parker) among my close friends. Their films reflect a wide range of subjects and techniques—from abstract to sexual, from hand drawn to electronic. By and large each is one-of-a-kind, and each one sparkles even after many screenings. Some of the films reflect the femaleness of their creators, and some reflect the creativeness of females. I would be proud to have made any one of them."

1. Galatea (1935)
silhouette cut-out animation by Lotte Reiniger
2. Night On Bald Mountain (1933)
Alexander Alexeieff and Claire Parker
3. Dwightiana (1959)
stop-motion with baubles and doodads,

- by Marie Menke
4. Abstronic (1952)
by Mary Ellen Bute
5. The Owl Who Married The Goose (1974)
sand animation by Caroline Leaf
6. Improvization (1977)
video animation of dance Kei Takei, by Doris Chase
7. Tub Film (1972)
minimal line drawing by Mary Beams
8. Charleston Home Movie (1980)
rotoscoping with feeling, by Deanne Morse
9. Permanent Wave (1969)
optical printing with passion, by Anita Thacher

Aleksandra Korejwo's top 10 picks

"I think salt corresponds with sand from the desert as well."

1. Alice in Wonderland
by Walt Disney
2. One film from the Nick Park collection—Just for laughing
3. One film from Faith Hubley collection--It is the colored music for my eyes
4. The Subject of the Picture
by George Schwitzgebel—To remember good painting
5. In the Time of Angels
by David Anderson—For my romantic soul
6. Adagio Cantabulo
by Tomaso Albinoni
7. Divertimento KV13 Presto
by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
8. The Flight of the Bumble Bee
by Nikolai Rimski-Korsakov
9. The Swan — For contemplation
10. Hallelujah—For joy





Artwork by Joanna Priestley

Linda Simensky's 10 picks

"If I were packing films for a desert island, I'd probably have to figure out a way to sneak an extra 50 films to the island. I'd also want a healthy dose of the work of independent women filmmakers, including Sally Cruikshank, Joanna Priestley, Michaela Pavlatova, Jane Aaron and Allison Snowden."

1. The Cat Came Back
by Cordell Barker
2. Screwy Truant
by Tex Avery
3. Broken Down Film
by Osamu Tezuka
4. The Tender Tale of Cinderella Penguin
by Janet Perlman
5. Duck Amuck
by Chuck Jones
6. Hair-Raising Hare
by Chuck Jones (or any other of about 25 Bugs Bunny cartoons)
7. Drawn From Memory
by Paul Fierlinger
8. Lava Lava
by Federico Vitali
9. Day-O
by Susan Brand
10. Pictures from Memory
by Nedjeljko Dragic

Nicole Salomon's 10 top picks

1. Damon the Mower
by George Dunning
2. Windy Day
by Faith and John Hubley
3. Une Bombe par Harard
by Jean-François Laguionie
4. Tableaux d'une Exposition
by Claire Parker and Alexandre Alexeieff
5. The Big Snit
by Richard Condit
6. Pulcinella
by Emanuelle Luzzati & Giulio Gianini
7. To Shoot without Shooting
by Kihachiro Kawamoto
8. Kama Sutra Rides Again
by Bob Godfrey (when cheering up is necessary)
9. Three Monks
by Ada
10. The Lion and the Song
by Bretislav Pojar



And finally, my top 10 picks if stranded on a desert island—including plenty of sunscreen and (Snapple) mango iced tea...

1. Fantasia
by Walt Disney
2. Pink Floyd The Wall
by Roger Waters, Gerald Scarfe and Alan Parker
3. The Lady and the Tramp
by Walt Disney
4. The entire works of Aardman Animations
5. Anything Max & Dave Fleischer ever made, especially the bouncing ball Sing-A-Longs with Ethel Merman
6. Girls Night Out
by Joanna Quinn
7. Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
by Ken Hughes (United Artists)
8. The Beany and Cecil Show animated series by Bob Clampett
9. Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
by Rankin-Bass Studios
10. How the Grinch Stole Christmas
by Chuck Jones

Frankie Kowalski is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine and is a regular contributor to ASIFA-Hollywood's newsletter The Inbetweeneer.



NEWS

Saul Bass, Animator, Graphic Designer and Filmmaker, Dies.

Bass, who revolutionized the design and production of feature film credits with his innovative design and animation concepts died April 25, in Los Angeles, at the age of 75. His early work on such Otto Preminger films as *Carmen Jones* and *The Man With the Golden Arm* caused a sensation in their day and opened the market for production of extended animated title sequences in theatrical films. In 1961, he married Elaine Bakatura, who became his collaborator on a number of projects, including several award-winning shorts.

Colossal Gives Up on Commercials, Refocuses Efforts on "Content."

After 20 years as a full-service commercial house, Colossal Pictures announced that it "focus to content development for television, feature films and new media—as well as context and identity design for TV, interactive navigators, web sites and location-based entertainment." Concurrently, Gary Gutierrez, a co-founder with Drew Takahashi of Colossal, announced his departure from the company. The announcement was the latest in a number of changes from the San Francisco-based studio, ranging from development deals with companies

like Walt Disney Television Animation to a major investment in Colossal by software publisher Quark; Gutierrez' departure is also the most dramatic of recent staff changes reflecting the turmoil the company has been going through in recent months. The announcement that it was getting out of the commercial business was startling, to say the least, as it ranked as one of the top five commercial houses in the United States, and will lead to substantial layoffs from one of the Bay Area's largest studios.

Universal Family Entertainment and Universal Cartoon Studios have been folded into MCA Television Entertainment (MTE).

In a move to streamline and consolidate its television operations, Barbara Fisher, President of MTE, will now add oversight of all family entertainment activities to her current responsibilities. As part of the reorganization, current UFE President Jeff Segal has entered into a production deal with the MCA Television Group and will continue to develop and projects for the company.

Cambridge Animation Systems Debuts Animo V2 and Announces Software's Availability on Windows NT.

The latest upgrade to one of the leading digital ink-and-paint software systems was recently announced. The new version is said to include a new architecture

for greater production speed and flexibility, a new user interface, a computerized version of the "X-sheet," an open system architecture that allows users to integrate a wide range of software into the production environment, and a new interactive PencilTester module. In addition, Cambridge announced that it will be shipping a Windows NT version of its Animo software later this year.

DreamWorks Feature Animation at work on El Dorado.

Dylan Kohler, co-head of DreamWorks' technology department states that they hope to start principal production on *El Dorado* by the middle of next year. The company is already in production on its first animated feature, *The Prince of Egypt*, and is involved with an as yet untitled feature being done by Pacific Data Images, which DreamWorks recently bought a 40% stake in. It is also in development on a fourth feature, which has yet to get the green light.

7th Level Teams Up With Disney and Morgan Creek for New Games.

This summer, 7th Level will be coming out with new CD-ROM games this summer in collaboration with Disney Interactive and Morgan Creek Interactive. The former involves a new gamepack featuring characters from Disney's upcoming feature, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, while the latter is an interactive version of *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective*.



Animation World Magazine 1996-97 Calendar

Coming in June

The Independent Spirit



The June issue will focus on the role independent animators play in the animation industry, especially in feature films. Watch for articles on the surreal Brothers Quay, a the marvelously wacky Bill Plympton, as well as a look back on the career of Germany's legendary Lotte Reiniger. Also, director John Dilworth takes a look at the new est in anime, Ghost in the Shell.



The Spirit of the Olympics	(July)
Anime, Anime, Anime—A Worldwide Phenomenon	(August)
International Television	(September)
Politics & Propaganda	(October)
Theme Park Animation	(November)
Interactive Animation	(December)
Animation Festivals	(January '97)
International Animation Industry	(February '97)
Children & Animation	(March '97)